

TEMPLE FOOD OF INDIA



Krishnaprerna

Krishna Prerna Charitable Trust, registered in 2006 was formed to promote Indian cultural practices and tradition. We are committed to preserving or rediscovering tangible and intangible cultural heritage through various forms. Our key focus is an experiential exposure to living traditions of India, with a mandate to make them part of mainstream daily life.

Bhog - Temple Food of India explores and celebrates the link between food and culture and endeavors to resurrect some elided portions of India's heritage cuisine. It would be extremely heartening to see the custodians of our 'kitchen religion', especially temple cooks from the rural areas and pilgrim towns becoming a part of the cuisine culture of our cities. We are pleased to announce the forthcoming release of Meetha Bol (mithai) and Taral Bhog (drinks) quick on the heels of Bhog. The relevance of traditional coolants like 'Saunf ka Sharbat' and mithais like 'Arnarasawalli' is even more in today's context and nothing would give us more satisfaction than to collaborate with avant garde eateries specializing in haute cuisine, globally to show case this variety.

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We do not however have any quibble with our readers using the contents to their best advantage and spreading the aromas of their kitchen fires far and wide. Pray. Eat. Feed. Eat again!

The cover uses sindhoor (vermillion) traditionally used by married Hindu women in the parting of their hair as a sign of fertility and to invoke the protection of their husband. It is also used as tilak in temples and tikka to wish warriors victory in battle. According to Hindu astrology Mesha Rashi (House of Aries) is on the forehead. Mars is the Lord of Mesha and his colour is the auspicious red. In Hindu culture, sindhoor denotes saubhagya (good fortune) and is a symbol of Shakti (female energy) and Lakshmi (prosperity).

Blog

THE BLOG OF THE BUDHIRAJA

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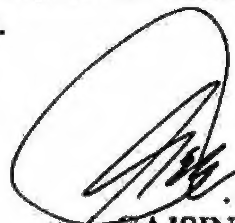
H.H. GAJSINGH II
MAHARAJA OF MARWAR-JODHPUR



UMAID BHAWAN PALACE
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At the outset I would like to congratulate the authors – Geeta & Arun Budhiraja for their fine work and devotion in putting together this wonderful book.

Preservation of India's heritage and culture has been a long standing passion and commitment with our family and I do believe that Food is an integral part of this culture and indeed a living tradition. While I confess that this very specialized area has escaped my attention, I deeply appreciate the effort at hand and am delighted to extend full support to this book. I understand that the laudable intention of projecting the true custodians of the 'kitchen religion' is their motivation and I urge every reader to come forward and encourage the authors on their journey.


GAJSINGH
MAHARAJA OF JODHPUR

30th Oct., 2012

contents

• Introduction • • • • •	2
• Temple Life • • • • •	4
• About Bhog • • • • •	40
• Recipes • • • • •	50
Mangala	54
Shringar bhog	64
Gwala bhog	70
Rajbhog	76
Utthapan bhog	134
Sandhya bhog	136
Sandhya aarti	148
Shayan bhog	158
• Mithai • • • • •	170
• Glossary • • • • •	201
• Acknowledgements • • • • •	205



Dr. KARAN SINGH



वेदाद्वयेन पुरुषस्यैव नित्यं आदित्यवर्णम्

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Foreword

Temples in India have, through the ages, been not only a focus of prayer and devotion, but also a centre for social and group meetings, festivals and celebrations. Among the important aspects of the temple is the *prasad* or *bhog* which is the food prepared in the temple premises, offered to the deity and then distributed among the congregation.

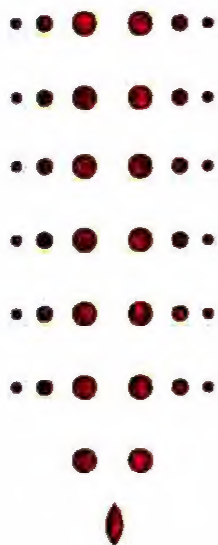
Food is, of course, a fundamental factor of human civilization, but when it is linked with religious activity it takes on a special significance. Each major temple employs specially trained cooks who prepare the dishes that are served. However, it is not generally known that each significant temple in India has a special and specific menu, so that the temple food of India covers a very wide and varying spectrum of dishes, sometimes called *chhappan-bhog*, all the way from the Himalayas down to the south where three great oceans meet at the feet of Mother India.

Geeta and Arun Budhiraja have, after considerable research and travel, brought together a fascinating volume describing and illustrating the various temple foods of India all the way from Vaishno Devi to Kanyakumari. They have included the recipes and a large number of photographs, which make the book a unique repository of wisdom regarding our cuisine and culture. It is significant that the dishes are prepared from the vegetables and fruits that are available in a particular area, thus representing a huge variety of cuisine.

I congratulate the Budhirajas for their pioneering work in this largely neglected field. As Chairman of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations I am aware that cuisine represents a significant dimension of our multi-faceted and pluralistic cultural heritage. This book *BHOG: Temple Food of India* will be of great interest to all of those who are concerned about our temples and their ambience. I am sure the book will be widely appreciated in India and abroad.

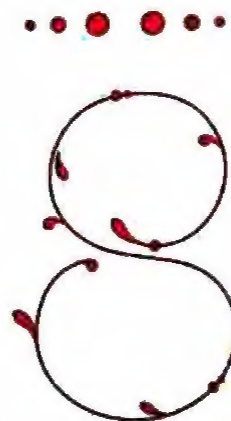
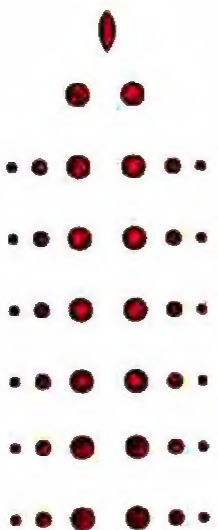
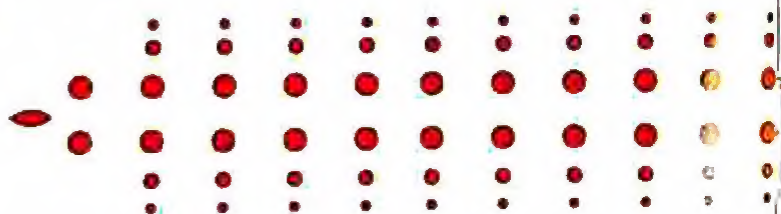

Karan Singh

Deepavali
13 Nov 2012



r i t u

*The Indian calender
is divided into six
seasons traditionally:*



p r a h a r

- **Vasanta (Spring)** known as the Hindu Lunar months of Chaitra and Vaisakha - March 20-May 20 - in the English calander
- **Grishma (Summer)** Jyeshtha and Aashaadha May 20-July 20
- **Varsha (Monsoon)** Shraavana and Bhadrapad July 20-Sept 20
- **Sharad (Autumn)** Ashwin and Kartika Sept 20 – Nov 20
- **Hemant (Winter)** Margashirsha and Pausha Nov 20 – Jan 20
- **Shishir (Winter and Fall)** Magh and Phalgun Jan 20 –Mar 20

For all practical purposes however, there are three major divisions and each recipe will have an icon to indicate the season it is offered in:

•••	Summer: April - June	☀
•••	Monsoon: July - September	☔
•••	Winter: November - February	❄
•••	Some dishes are offered right through the year (all seasons)	☀❄☔

The interim periods are transitory and the Navratras fall in this period. In terms of food to be consumed, this is the time to strengthen and prepare the body for the forthcoming winter on one hand and summer on the other.

Temples We Visited

Braj Bhoomi - Gokul, Govardhan, Jatipura, Kamvan, Barsana, Radha Kund • Srinathji, Nathdwara

• Govindevi • Jagannath • Guruvayoor • Udupi • Kashivishvanath, Annapurna Devi and Sankat Mochan- Varanasi • Vaishnodevi • Kamakhya and Umananda Temple - Guwahati

• Kali Bari- Kolkata • Padmanabha Temple- Thiruvanthapuram • Dharamsthal

• Sachiya Mata, Osian • Mansa Devi, Chandigarh • Jwalaji, Kangra H.P. • Baijnath H.P.

• Tungnath, Uttarakhand • Kapeleshwar, Chennai • Dilwara Temple, Mt. Abu

• Sun Temple, Konark • Triambakeshwar Temple, Nasik • Eklingji Temple, between Nathdwara and Udaipur • Har Ki Pauri, Haridwar • Rishikesh • Naina Devi, Nainital • Gangotri

• Kothdwar - Kanav Ashram and Tarkeshwar Temple • Bhimkali Temple, Sarahan

• Hanuman Temple, Manki Point, Kasauli • Jakhoo, Shimla • Badrinath • Kedarnath

• Shiv Shakti Mandir, Dalhousi, H.P. • Shirdi Sai Baba • Swamimalai, T.N.

Prahar is the Sanskrit word for a variable unit of time used in India to divide the 24 hour day, typically into ashta (eight) parts. While it has fallen out of use in everyday routine life, temples in India more or less adhere to these eight divisions for rituals during the day. The Jagannath Temple in Puri has 6 Prahars, beginning at 7 a.m., Kashi Vishwanath in Varanasi follows 5, beginning at 3 a.m. and most Krishna Temples have 8 divisions even as timings may vary according to season, geography or temple. Recipes are categorized according to the Prahar that they are offered in rather than in the conventional divisions.

•••	Mangala 5:00 am - 7:00 am
•••	Shringar 7:30 am - 9:30 am
•••	Gwala (also called Madhyahn) 9:30 am - 11:00 am
•••	Rajbhog 11:30 am - 12:00 noon
•••	Utthapan 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm
•••	Sandhya Bhog 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
•••	Sandhya Arti 6:00 pm - 7:45 pm
•••	Shayan Bhog 7:00 pm - 8:45 pm

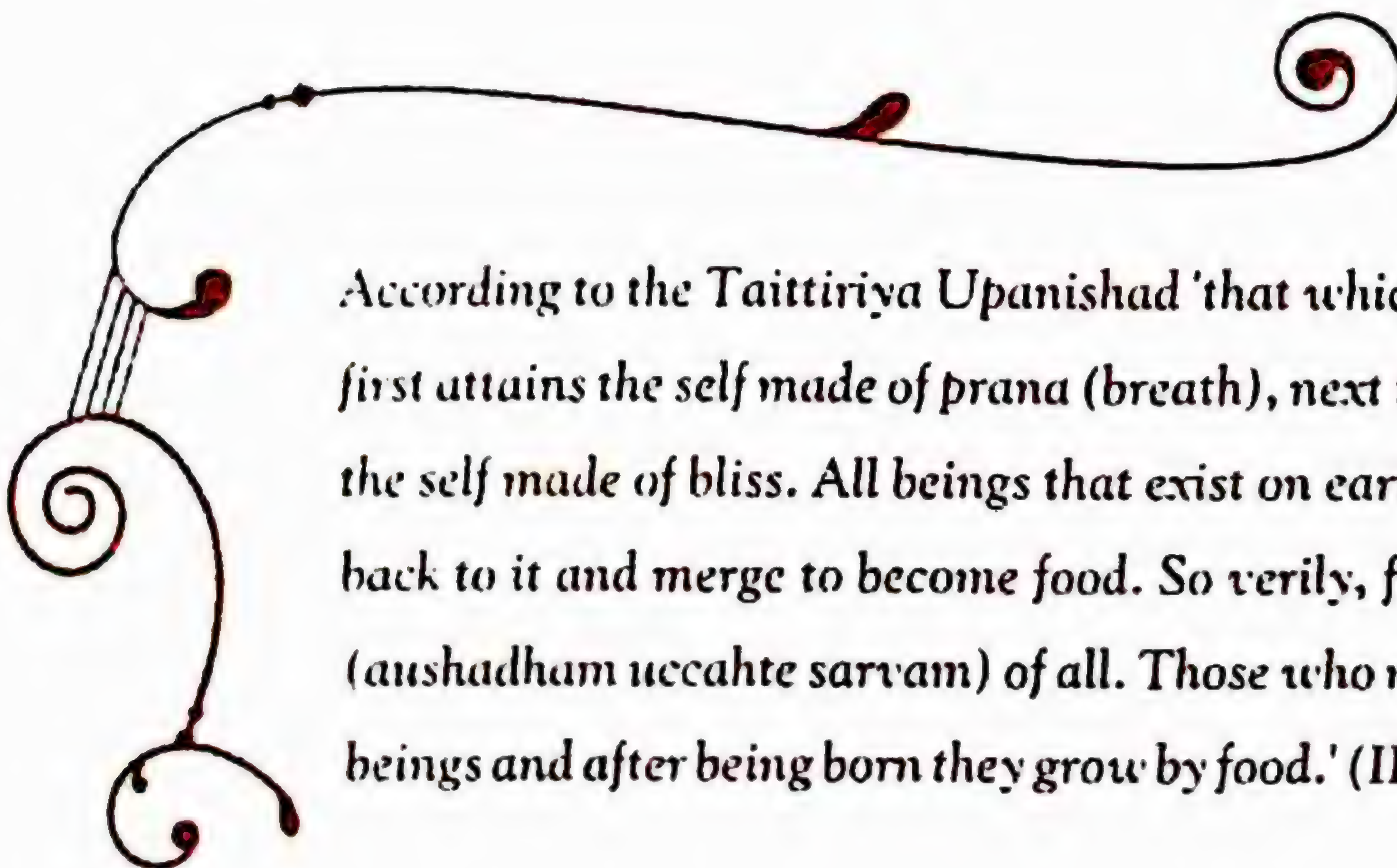
ॐ सह नाववतु ।
सह वीर्यं ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

*Aum sahana vavatu, sahanau bhunaktu, saha veeryam karavavahai
Tejasvinavadheetamastu ma vidvishavhai
Aum Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi!*


सह नौ भुनक्तुः
करवावहे
तु मा विद्दिषावहे
तैः शान्तिः॥

May He protect us both (the teacher and the taught) together, by (revealing knowledge)
May He protect us both (by vouchsafing the results of knowledge)
May we attain vigour together
Let what we study be invigorating
May we not cavil at each other.
Aum! Peace Peace Peace.

The Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads form the trilogy of Vedic literature and are the embodiment of the ancient wisdom of our ancestors. The Taittiriya Upanishad has several references to food, its origins and usefulness to human life. Atma or soul in human form has been perceived in Vedic epistemology, as sheathed by five layers or kosa, the outermost being the annamaya kosa or the physical body, produced and sustained by food. The remaining four bodies are the Pranamaya kosa (air apparent sheath), Manomaya kosa (mind apparent sheath) Vijananmaya kosa (wisdom apparent sheath) and Anandamaya kosa (bliss apparent sheath). The physical or food body has also been identified with the earth element, one of the five prime elements which form the universe, because it consists mostly of earth matter.



According to the Taittiriya Upanishad 'that which is in man is also in the sun. He who knows thus upon leaving this world first attains the self made of prana (breath), next the self made of mind, next the self made of buddhi (intelligence) and lastly the self made of bliss. All beings that exist on earth are born of food. Thereafter they live by food. Again ultimately they go back to it and merge to become food. So verily, food is the eldest of all creatures. On that basis food is called the medicine (aushadham uccahte sarvam) of all. Those who meditate upon Brahman as food will obtain all food. From food are born all beings and after being born they grow by food.' (II.ii.1)



The gross body is the seat of our senses and it receives nourishment through the senses and food. Food thus plays a central role in explaining the Hindu concept of the cosmos and creation. The ancient texts elaborately narrate creation, food, and sacrifice. Four out of the five daily sacrifices involve offering of food. The cosmos represents a giant food cycle and the interdependence of all Beings is expressed in the offering of food.

Apart from being the source of creation, food is also seen as a threat in Hindu society. As food is the source of creation at the cosmic level, so is it the source of immorality at a social level. The food that we eat must maintain the balance between body, mind, intellect and emotion for our well being. To achieve this, Hinduism places great emphasis on what we eat and how we eat. It is believed to have potent properties that can either retard or advance our ultimate goal of attaining salvation. Hindu texts place great emphasis on eating the right kind of food since whatever we eat influences the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. These in turn influence the balance of our mind and body. Satvic food promotes longevity, health, purity, strength and cheerfulness. Rajasic causes pain, grief and disease and tamsic promotes slothfulness, cruelty and evil nature.

"The saintly persons get relief from all kinds of sins by partaking the food that has been first offered to gods as sacrifice. But those who prepare food for their selfish ends eat but only sins". (Bhagavad Gita 3:13)

Food occupies an important part in the religious life of Hindus. It is offered to ancestors during rituals (Shrad) and to Gods during invocation ceremonies. It is served to the deities in temples and to the needy and poor as part of sewa (service). When served to one's personal deity it is believed that the harmful energies in the food are neutralized.

Food is an integral part of Indian culture and the great emphasis on food is apparent from the fact that it has been called the 'kitchen religion'.

The belief that food captures the cultural heritage of a land is nowhere truer than in the Indian context. Food has been an important pillar of Indian culture and spirituality and indeed continues to be so even today. Legends in Hindu religion, as in most other religions have significant symbologies.



Ganesha the elephant God with four arms carrying symbolic items will also have at the feet, an abundance of food. Food represents material wealth, power and prosperity. When a man of realization (as represented by Ganesha) lives by the high principles, he achieves these material gains. They are always at his command but he has an attitude of indifference towards them. Alongside the spread of food, is a tiny rat looking up at the Lord. He does not touch the food but waits for his master's sanction as it were before consuming. The rat represents desire—it has a small mouth and tiny sharp teeth but is the greediest of all animals. Its greed and acquisitiveness are so great that it steals more than it can eat and hoards more than it can remember. This predominant trait justifies amply its symbolism as desire. One little desire in man can destroy his hard earned material and spiritual wealth. The rat looking up therefore denotes that the desires in a perfect man are absolutely under control. The activities of such a man are motivated by his clear discrimination and judgment rather than by an emotional craving to enjoy the variety of sense-objects of the world. - A. Parthasarthy



Temple Life



Hindus believe that their lives are merely stages in the progression to ultimate enlightenment. The temple is the focus for all aspects of everyday life in the Hindu community - religious, cultural, educational and social. The temple is also the place where God may be approached and where divine knowledge can be discovered to transcend the world of man. All aspects of the Hindu temple focus on the goal of enlightenment and liberation whether it be the principles of design and construction, the forms of its architecture and decoration or the rituals performed. All of these are determined by ancient texts called Shastras compiled by the priests, the Brahmins.



A 300 year old temple manuscript detailing bhog offerings at the Mathuradheesh Temple, Goverdhan.



One of the early reasons for travel was to go on a pilgrimage. Interestingly, even when a Hindu declares himself a devout Shiva, Krishna or Ganesha follower, it does not deter him from visiting shrines devoted to other deities. Thus there are no barriers or limits in Hinduism. Despite clear demarcations in the personalities, attributes and benefits of each sharply etched deity, the lines between them are also delightfully blurred. It is perhaps the only religion that celebrates the notion 'the more the merrier' in its purest sense. Like the mythological 330 million Gods in the Hindu pantheon, there are a seemingly infinite number of must visit pilgrim spots as well, each one important for a specific but equally significant reason.





Not only are temples situated at beautiful locations but the sense of piety and virtue that accompanies the visit is very attractive in its appeal and more than makes up for any hardships one might have undergone. The location of the temple at a high altitude signifies that spiritual evolution is above all mundane achievements in this world and to gain spiritual perfection man has to put in single minded effort. Even the construction of the temple with its outer entrance, courtyard and dark sanctum sanctorum usually lit by a single ghee/camphor lamp are significant steps for man to rise above his earthly desires or vāsanas and get in touch with his inner self or atman represented by the shrine.

While pilgrimages are usually an annual, bi-annual or even once in a lifetime experience (think Amarnath or Kailash), visits to temples are a more or a less regular affair. We visit a temple for any number of reasons—to ask, to thank, to seek, to cajole, to complain, to celebrate....the list is endless and God is our favourite sounding board. The lure of the temple is one that even the most “unhindu” Hindu would find difficult to ignore.



No visit to the temple is complete without an offering on the part of the devotee and the giving of prasād on the part of the priest. Offerings range from fruit, flowers, incense, items of adornment, jewellery and sweets. The prasād on the other hand is usually a tantalizing bit of ambrosia — ladoos, imarti, halwa, puri, chole — each with a taste and flavor that lingers on the palate and leaves you longing for more. The taste of prasād is unsurpassed. It probably has everything to do with the fact that it was first offered to the presiding deity as bhog to satisfy its spiritual hunger and after being blessed, the food becomes sanctified as Prasād, to be distributed amongst the devotees. Inspired by the sheer festive spirit and ambrosial taste of prasād everywhere, we embarked on a journey of a lifetime.

While the pilgrimage is ideally a solitary effort, happily, the distribution of prasād is a far from solitary experience. Festive and joyful, it is a celebration of sorts, and takes place amidst great fanfare and activity.

Sri Harmandir Sahib

The Golden Temple



Deg Teg Fateh is the Sikh slogan, a call to moral duty meaning victory in war, peace otherwise, recited at Ardas. Deg refers to the cauldron used to cook food for distribution, the langar, bhog or prasad and symbolizes charity and God's grace. Teg refers to the sword symbolizing victory over tyranny. Being double-edged it refers to temporal desires on the one hand and spiritual on the other and the victory of the spiritual over the temporal. Kadha Prasad is the traditional offering renowned for its energizing ingredients. It was given to soldiers before they embarked on their journey to the battle field.

••• Jasvinder Singhji let us into the secret to the delicious kadha served at this temple. To the regular ingredients for halwa, ½ katori sooji, ½ katori atta, 1 katori ghee, 1 katori sugar, 2¼ katori water add ¼ katori milk. After roasting the ghee and atta add the water, milk and sugar. The entire halwa must be roasted really well. The secret lies in the addition of milk and the roasting.



Many years ago a visit to Ladakh, at a time when tourism was not one of the region's most popular pastimes, led us to the Pathar Sahib Gurdwara. Literally emerging out of the ground this is the place where Guru Nanak is said to have rested his tired back against a stone. The stone bears the impression of his back to date.

Tired and hungry after a particularly rigorous journey on not very friendly terrain, we stopped to pay obeisance to the shrine and partook of a langar (prasad) consisting of finger licking good simple mah ki daal (whole urad daal) and hot fresh rotis straight from the tandoor. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the taste of that meal lingers even today.



b..r..a..j...b..h..o..o..m..i

Braj Bhoomi is the land of Krishna's birth, Mathura his birthplace and Vrindavan the village (originally) where he spent his early years up to adolescence.

Interestingly, the child-Krishna, instead of being worshipped as God is regarded as a part of the family, an endearing and mischievous youngster to be pampered and cajoled. He is addressed as 'Lalla' or 'Chabila' and his every need from food to clothing to sleep and play is lovingly and tenderly catered to.

Around 2004 or there about, a chance visit to Vrindavan proved to be life-changing in more ways than one. During forays into the Braj region we visited temples in Vrindavan, Mathura, Barsana, Gokul, Jathipura, Radhakund and Kamvan. Spending a few days at a time in the ashrams attached to major temples exposed us to a hitherto unknown way of life that was as different as it was simple. The core of the temple is of course the presiding deity and service to the deity controls the routine.







Local women in sevabhaav at ISCKON, Vrindavan

Mahanidhi Maharaj was one of the first to hear about our interest in Bhog and has been a constant source of inspiration in his exemplary devotion to Radha Rani. Celebrating Radha Ashtami at Radha Kund by floating 101 diyas in the kund is one of our magical moments.

"God delights in play with His friends, with His parents and with His darling gopis in Vrindavan.

God delights in flute song and dancing free.

And God especially delights in bhoga – the sublime taste of pure love in food.

Discover the taste of Godly delights in Geeta & Arun's wonderful book that looks so good you can practically smell and taste the delicacies within it!" - Swami Mahanidhi Maharaj



The Banke Bihari temple is what pilgrims flock to Vrindavan to see and perhaps it's most visited temple. Holi at this temple is an experience in itself although not recommended for either the faint hearted or those low on faith! The idol has strangely mesmerizing eyes and if you look into them long enough they would have a hypnotic effect. Flowers are used in abundance to decorate the interior of this temple and during the summer (Grisma) months the intricate phul banglas (literally meaning house of flowers) that are made fresh everyday are a great attraction to visit the temple lending a calmness and fragrance that makes even the intolerable heat of Northern India bearable.

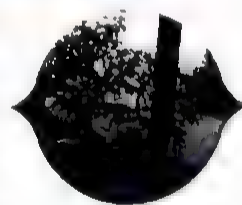
Radha Raman temple has a tiny but exquisitely detailed idol and a pair of binoculars is needed for a satisfactory darsan. This is the place where inspired sangeet baithaks take place and many a reputed Indian classical singer is known to come and pay obeisance here and earn blessings. The Kuliya Prasad is a special offering at this temple and the ones made in the temple kitchen have no parallel even in the best commercial shops.



The river Yamuna features prominently in Krishna Mythology. Early mornings and evenings are the best time to enjoy its tranquil depth.

In Vrindavan the ISCKON temple is a landmark. Locally known as the temple of the 'goras' (fair-skinned) this is one of the cleanest and most peaceful temples despite the crowds that throng it. Melodious bhajans resonate right through the day but the bhajans sung before the evening aarti reach such a crescendo, just the chant of 'Hare Rama Hare Rama, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna' to the accompaniment of mridang and cymbals, that we have fondly called it the 'rock bhajan' session. Sadly our favourite rockstar, Aindar Prabhu is no more but this remains a must do on every visit. It is always a delight to see people joyfully clapping or dancing in gay abandon to the infectious beat. Anything from the mouth-watering range of prasad available is delicious but the ludous are absolutely divine!

Lesser known perhaps, but immensely powerful is the 'suspended in time' Tattiyasthan. Babas (ascetics) in white with sandal-kesar smeared faces roam this ashram on raj (sand from the Yamuna) amid low lying kutias with yellow windows, latu-patas and monkeys. Desi ghee diyas illuminate their nights as they invoke the blessings of their presiding deity Mohini Bihariji through dhrupads or pads as per the season and occasion. This is the abode of Shri Haridas, teacher of the great Tansen and the person responsible for bringing the Great Mughal Emperor Akbar to his knees. Devotion takes the form of music here. The Babas invoke the blessings of their Lord through the various Ragas as per the teachings of their beloved Shri Haridas. Pangats or utsavs (banquets) are held periodically and these demonstrate the great culinary skill that relies more on love than expertise. Even a chance visit has given us a delicious meal. Our favourite however, is the special 'arbi ki sabzi' made here on Radha Ashtmi.



Lata-pata in
Ganesh formation



Understanding Bhog

Jangam on a path

2010



The wide-eyed Lord Jagannath's following knows no bounds. Residing in an imposing and beautiful structure which is home to people from all walks of life and a teeming hub for the widows selling handmade diyas, pandits conducting various rituals, palmists foretelling the future sitting under coconut thatch umbrellas, the triad of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra watch benignly. Home to the colourful Rathayatra this temple seems to have a vibrant life of its own.

According to the Skanda Purana, Lord Jagannath redeems his devotees by permitting them to partake his Mahaprasad, to have his darshan and worship Him by rituals and offering gifts. Mahaprasad is treated here as 'Anna Brahma' as per the Upanishads and is cooked only in earthen pots and on hearths. The steam-cooked food is offered to Lord Jagannath first and then to Goddess Binala after which it becomes Mahaprasad which consolidates human bond, sanctifies sacraments and grooms the departing soul for its journey upwards.

A visit to Kumarpoda to see the special pots being made for the temple and deeply humbling interaction with the Mahasupakars was the highlight of our trip to Puri.



Handmade diya battis



Sudarshan and Gopinath Supakar



Khaja (made of maida, sugar and ghee) which stays fresh for days.

At Anand Bazaar, Humina Supakar treated us to Dahi Pokaro, a wonderfully refreshing drink made of rice gruel, flavoured with dahi, orange peel, lemon zest, jeera, rock salt and dhania. It was the perfect antidote to the humid Puri weather and we were glad that the information that the rice gruel was 6 months old had not deterred us from trying it!

The story goes that the Supakars are conventionally not allowed to either cook in their own houses or even light a diya. Their entire life is devoted to bhog-sewa at the temple.

There is an interesting legend associated with the Jagannath temple of Puri. It is said that King Indradyumna, the ruler of the territory, saw Lord Jagannath in his dreams and following the Lord's wishes, as told to him in his dreams, he got the Jagannath Puri Temple constructed.



S · h · r · i · n · a · t · h · j · i · T · e · m · p · l · e

Srinathji the presiding deity is the fashionable seven year old god who keeps up with the times and wears a different dress every day of the year, with matching adornments painstakingly selected by representatives of the Pushtimargi sect. Aesthetics of a very high level and loving attention to detail are a hallmark of the Pushtimargis. The gorgeously adorned idol is not only colourful but great attention is also paid to his recreational needs as a young 7-year old. Lying before the idol we saw silver playthings including a ball, racquet, tourniquet etc much to our delight!



Seva is a key element of worship in Pushti Marg. The temple where communal worship takes place is called a "haveli" - literally a mansion. There is a daily routine of allowing the laity to have "darshan" (adore) the divine icon 8 times a day.

We were directed to the *prasad* area of the Srinathji temple and discovered a well-organised system to distribute *prasad*. Available against payment, a *tokri* (basket) laden with *kacha bhojan* – rice, dal, vegetables, *kadhi*, and *kheer* was handed over to us for *Raj Bhog*. A tiny *sakora* (earthen cup) with a sweet and delicately flavoured fluid with little white strands floating in it held us enthralled till we discovered it was apple *murabba*. Exquisite and redolent with *kesar* and the cooling touch of *Baras*, this was nectar. Not quite satisfied we returned in the evening to collect the *Shayan Prasad*, consisting of *Anasakri*, *Puris* and other dry treats. All this after endless visits to the market for freshly prepared *thandai* and *kesar lassi*.



Siddhivinayak Temple

Siddhivinayak or Lord Ganesha holds a very important position in Hindu mythology. It is believed that any new work, new place or new possession will prosper if one prays to Him at the outset.

The story of the birth of this zoomorphic deity, as depicted in the Shiva Purana, explains his importance: Once goddess Parvati, while bathing, created a boy out of the dirt of her body and assigned him the task of guarding the entrance to her bathroom. When Shiva, her husband returned, he was surprised to find a stranger denying him access, and struck off the boy's head in rage. Parvati broke down in utter grief and to soothe her, Shiva sent out his squad (gana) to fetch the head of any sleeping being who was facing the north. The squad found a sleeping elephant and brought back its severed head, which was then attached to the body of the boy. Shiva restored its life and made him the leader (pati) of his troops. Hence his name 'Ganapati'. Shiva also bestowed a boon that people would worship him and invoke his name before undertaking any venture.

The best time to visit the Siddi Vinayaka Temple located in the heart of Bombay, now Mumbai, is 5 a.m. although even at this early hour there is a long queue at the entrance. We traversed the narrow lane known as the 'Phool Gali, dotted with a large number of stalls, with shopkeepers selling Tulsi flower garlands, coconuts, sweets, etc to be offered to the Lord.

Our 5 a.m. visit was rewarded with being part of a wonderful mangala aarti performed to the beat of mridangam, cymbals and tinkling bells. The air was redolent with the fragrance of sandal and jasmine and we clung onto our prasad of modaks, eager to sink our teeth into their moist softness.

E • k • l • i • n • g • j • i T • e • m • p • l • e

En-route to Udaipur from Nathdwara, stands the ancient and inspiring Eklingji temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. The Eklingji deity is the presiding deity of the Mewar rulers and prayers here are held in the traditional Vedic style starting as early as 4 am every day.



We happened to reach the temple at 5 am just as preparations for the morning prayers were beginning and we were allowed to sit in the inner 'mandap' and watch the rituals. After the snan (bath) with milk, the four sided idol was anointed with fresh sandalwood paste and a garland of fragrant white flowers placed over the top like a halo. A single white flower was used as a nose pin. Then a bright red and gold chunri was draped over, completing the shringar .



A melodious Aarti was then performed followed by bhajans to the accompaniment of a harmonium and mridang. To complete the morning prayer, halwa prasad, hot and delicious, was distributed to all of the 5 devotees who happened to have experienced the magical moment.

The Eklingnath Temple is a sight to behold. Spread over 2,500 sq ft are 108 small temples that encircle the main pyramid structure. Behind the finely carved silver Nandi bull at the entrance, stands the statue of an erstwhile ruler and staunch devotee depicted doing penance on one toe. Behind the statue serving as a cover is a chameli tree in full bloom dropping its fragrant flowers as if in offering to Eklingji and filling the air with a delicate aroma.

The stunning four-faced idol of Eklingji (Lord Shiva) is made out of black marble and depicts the four forms of Lord Shiva. The east-facing part is recognized as Surya, the west-facing part is Lord Brahma, the north-facing part is Lord Vishnu and the south-facing part is Rudra i.e. Lord Shiva himself. The zenith of the multifaceted idol is known as 'Yantra' that stands for the ultimate reality. The Shivlinga is garlanded by a silver snake. The main temple is protected with heavy silver doors, which depict Lord Ganesha and Lord Kartikay guarding their father.







B Ashutosh Sarma displaying ingredients for bhog



Naba Kumar Sharma explaining cooking methods

G o v i n d e v T e m p l e

..... Landing in Imphal on the first day of a three-day curfew we were very apprehensive. The first sight of the Govindevi temple, however, like an oasis melted away all our fears. The Govindevi temple is a beautiful pristine white structure and home to a delicate and intricately carved deity that is very aesthetically offered various items through the day. Dressed in white clothes we were greeted by a festive atmosphere at the temple where the men and women were dressed in traditional attire eagerly awaiting the utsav (prasad). After a delicious Rajbhog the cooks generously shared recipes and anecdotes.

Worshippers are encouraged to visit the temple dressed in white - dhotis or kurta pyjama for the men and white sari or salwar-kameez for the women. The dress code is to be strictly adhered to for devotees who wish to partake of the Utsav (midday meal). They must also be freshly bathed and have performed puja at home.

..... The wonderful thing about bhog in Manipur is its liberal use of a profusion of fresh herbs and spices native to the area that lent a whole new dimension to the dish and excited the palate. Chillies - both green and red- and tomatoes are used in liberal quantities unlike in other temples where they are shunned.

..... While it's difficult to choose a favourite from the wide array, we were served with such love, the fruit rasa - a piquant sweet and sour dish of Haibong (sour fruit) served over plain boiled rice is an unforgettable taste.

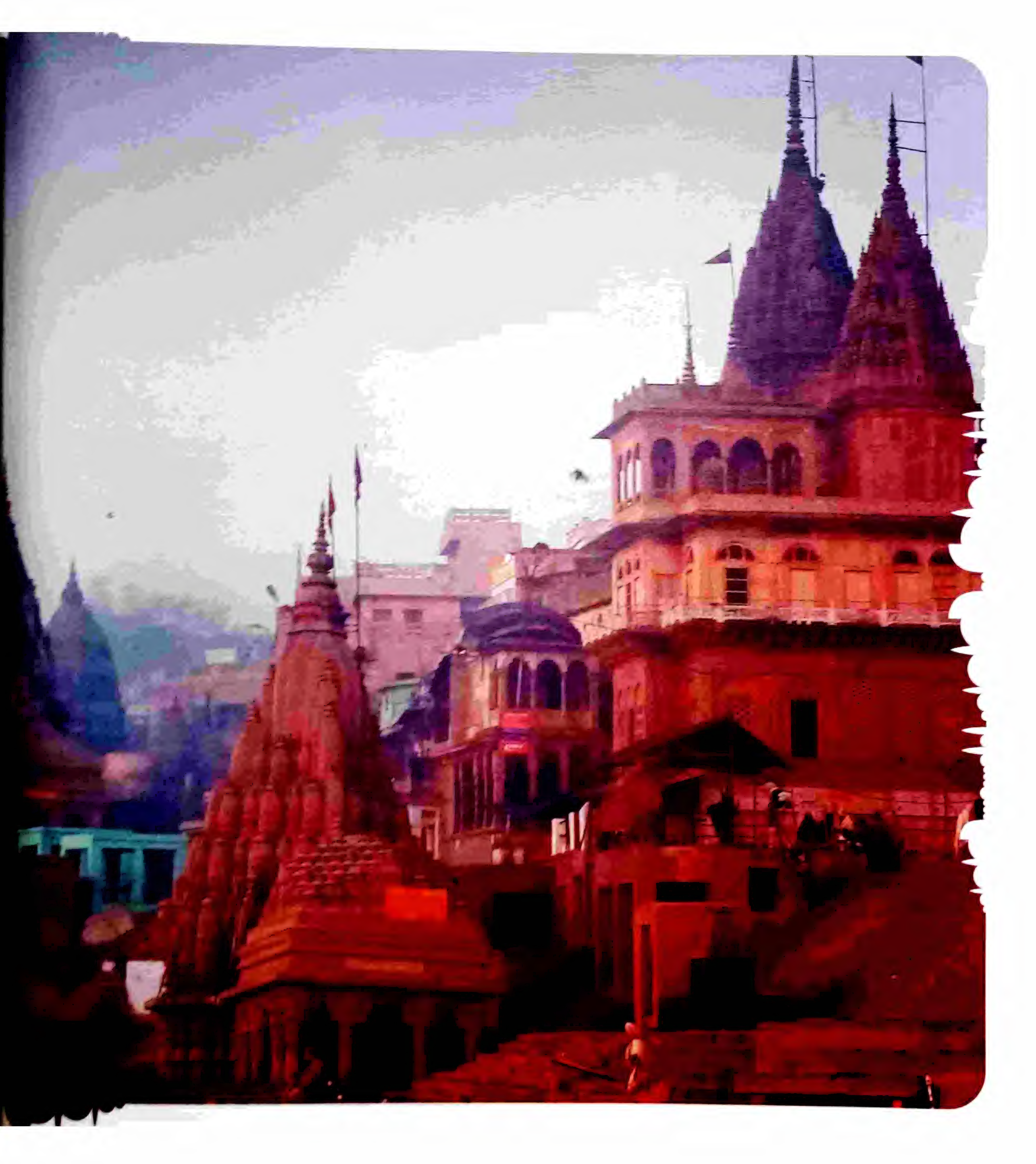
K a s h i

V i s h w a n a t h

T e m p l e

Varanasi also commonly known as Banaras, situated on the banks of the Ganga is regarded as the holiest existing place of the Hindus, where at least once in a lifetime, a Hindu is expected to do pilgrimage, and if possible, also pour the remains (ashes) of cremated ancestors into the Ganga. It is also one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and the oldest in India.







Ganga Aarti



Varanasi Ghats



Kashi Vishwanath Temple

In the Rigveda, the city was referred to as Kasi or Kashi, "the luminous one" as an allusion to the city's historical status as a centre of learning, literature, art and culture. Kasikhand described the glory of the city in 15, 000 verses in the Skanda Purana. In one verse, Lord Shiva says, 'The three worlds form one city of mine, and Kashi is my royal palace therein'. It is also a general belief that it stands on the weapon, "The Trishool" (Trident), of Lord Shiva and is the most important of the 12 jyotirlingams.

As per the Shiv Mahapuran, Brahma (the Creator) and Vishnu (the Preserver) had an argument over supremacy of creation. To test them, Shiva pierced the three worlds as a huge endless pillar of light, the Jyotirlinga. Vishnu and Brahma split their ways to downwards and upwards respectively to find the end of the light in either directions. Brahma lied that he found out the end, while Vishnu conceded his defeat. Shiva appeared as a second pillar of light and cursed Brahma that he would have no place in ceremonies while Vishnu would be worshipped till the end of eternity. The Jyotirlinga is the supreme partless reality, out of which Shiva partly appears. The Jyothirlinga shrines, thus are places where Shiva appeared as a fiery column of light. [At all these sites, the primary image is the lingam representing the Stambha pillar, with neither beginning nor end, symbolizing the infinite nature of Shiva.]

Visiting Varanasi had been a long cherished dream and truth to tell, it lived up to every expectation. From the bustling ghats, the busy, colourful market place selling the famous thandai and tamatar ki chat to the dread-locked salvation seekers that roam the streets, Varanasi was delightful. An early morning boat ride to greet the sun rise and feeding migratory birds vies with the festive Ganga aarti seen from the river side for first place as a favourite moment.

Our (unplanned) arrival in Varanasi was on a Monday – the day dedicated to Lord Shiva and the visit to the temple has to be one of the most mystic by far. On reaching the temple we encountered a serpentine queue of devotees all the way through the crowded and busy market, all holding onto the traditional offering of fresh unboiled milk, bel pattas, bhang (marijuana) leaves and dhatura. It promised to be a long wait to catch a glimpse of the shrine when out of nowhere a young man appeared and promised to take us straight to the shrine. We cynically remarked that he would charge us a significant amount to skip the queue to which he disarmingly smiled and shook his head, reached out and took my hand and led us to buy Prasad and then with quick steps, helped us weave our way through the waiting crowds. Before we knew it, we were in the midst of a surge of devotees in the inner sanctum and getting our first glimpse of the famous 'Kashi Vishwanath'. After the darshan this

young man led us out to collect our belongings and deposited us safely back to where he had found us waiting. No money exchanged hands.

Later at the temple we met Anshu Mishra Bhandari who regaled us with stories about his 'bhole baba' and had a knack of introducing every recipe as 'His favourite'. We were eventually compelled to inquire how he knew that this or that was 'His' favourite. He smiled disarmingly and replied that 'He' had only one indulgence, the rest of the offerings were our ways of pampering him so our favorite dish automatically became his fave! One more reason for Him to aptly be called 'bhole'!

The small portion of Magdal that was offered as the end of the Rajbhog was rich and redolent with the flavor of kesar. It's creamy texture belies the fact that the main ingredient is urad daal!

Located close to the Kashi Vishwanath temple in the bustling and vibrant Gaudilya area in the center of the city is the temple of Ma Annapurna. The word refers to the Goddess of 'ann'- cereal or basic food-and the main festival celebrated here is Annakoot.

The deity of Ma Annapurna in shining gold is a pleasantly plump face with the most beatific smile. It epitomizes the benevolence and benignity of maternal love-pure and selfless.

Prasad here was besan and maida ladoos. They tasted fresh and delicate and we were amazed when told that they had been made six months ago on the occasion of annakoot! Such is the power of pure ingredients and bhaav.



Traditional offering at Kashi Vishwanath temple



Kanakana Kindi

S · r · i · K · r · i · s · h · n · a · T · e · m · p · l · e

The famous Sri Krishna temple in Udupi is renowned for its statue of Sri Krishna installed by the great saint Sri Madhvacharya and the penance and influence of Sri Vaadiraja yathivarennya. The other attraction of this temple is the 'Kanakana Kindi' - a small window - through which Krishna is believed to have given darshan to his ardent devotee, Kanakadasa.



Sri Vishwa Vallabha Theertha Swamiji, the young pontiff at the temple greeted us with much affection and introduced us to Shrinathji who generously shared the secrets of the famous Udupi cuisine with us.

Udupi is synonymous with south Indian cuisine, thanks to the presence of an Udupi restaurant on every second street corner of every major and minor city. The Udupi of popular consciousness, however, has little to do with a culinary tradition that dates back to the 13th century – when the saint-philosopher Madhavacharya established the Sri Krishna Temple in Udupi, on Karnataka's western coast. The devout believed that Krishna would wander away unless he was enticed by delicious eats. This belief resulted in the 'naivedya', where cooked delicacies—no fewer than 14 different varieties—are offered to the Lord every day.

We arrived in Udupi two days after Holi in North India is celebrated and our first sight within the temple was of the head Pujari and young initiates applying bright fuschia colour to each other, chasing each other around the kund and finally plunging into the cool water to wash away the colour. They greeted us with great affection, applying colour and urging us to stay for the afternoon Prasad.

Darshan at the temple was a beautiful experience as was the lingering taste of the elaborate meal that followed. The highlight of the meal being a soft, sweet Holige - roti stuffed with sweet, spiced gram.



Morning assembly before the doors open for darshan

Sree Guruvayoorappan

Known as Vishnu's abode on earth after he transcended to heaven, the Guruvayoor temple has a tangible mysticism about it. Coincidentally, we reached on the most important day of the 10-day annual Utsav that is held to celebrate the almighty's descent on earth for these few days in order to ensure that his devotees are content. During the Sreevelli (Utsav) all the senses of the devotees are pampered through music, food, decorations and lights. It is a feast for the senses as He wants his devotees to be content because if they are happy their output will be more!



Colourful utsav decorations



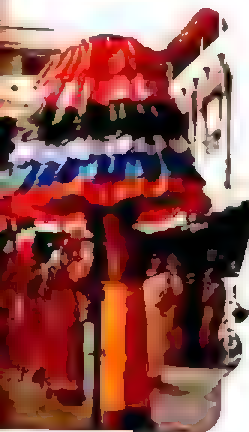
Arriving in Guruvayoor on the most auspicious day of the Sreevelli (Utsav) we loved the brightly decorated streets, sounds of celebration everywhere and our first sight of Kanan. The temple authorities cordially offered help at every stage and Shri Rajshekharan was a mine of information on bhog rituals. He treated us to the spectacular sight of the diya alight on the sides of the temple.

The Utsav begins with the blessing of the 'tiratha' a kalasham containing water, honey, curd and ghee that is offered for the rejuvenation of god. Then follows the elephant race.

The winner of the race for the last 6 years is Kanan, a jet black elephant who has the distinction of being a part of the daily morning procession during the Utsav. Elaborately decorated and adorned he walks along majestically with Nandini and Ratan and they stand quietly while the rituals are being performed.

Guruvayoor is perhaps the only temple that maintains its own elephant sanctuary that is home to no less than 70 elephants.

We watched the Pal Payasam being cooked in a huge simmering cauldron set over flaming coconut husks and mounds of papads being fried to crunchy perfection. The Nei (ghee) Payasam, a speciality here, had us awake every morning at 4.00 a.m. to collect tokens and queue up for this sumptuous prasad.



Shri Rajshekharan revealing temple kitchen secrets



Kanan enjoying a bath

Kedarnath Temple

One of the holiest pilgrimages for the Hindus, Kedarnath Temple is located in the picturesque surroundings of Rudra Himalaya Range at a height of 12,000 feet on a mountain named Kedar. The temple at Kedarnath enshrining the Jyotirlingam of Shiva opens only 6 months a year from April-November. The priests then go to Ukhimath, where the worship of Kedareshwara is continued during the winter season.





Before starting the trek to Kedarnath we were told to take a dip in the hot spring at Gauri Kund to seek the blessings of Gauri (Parvati) who is reputed to have undertaken severe penance to win over Lord Shiva. Legend has it that Shiva finally declared his love for Parvati here. The hot spring seemed to be boiling and we almost scalded a finger dipped in gingerly, but when we plunged in with eyes tightly closed in faith, it was only pleasantly warm!

Reaching Kedarnath had its challenges, as the high altitude trek resulted in a splitting headache but the sight of the imposing temple standing stark against the peaks drained away all the exhaustion. Of course the hot puris and aloo sabji we got as Prasad worked their own magic!

On the way back from Kedarnath, we spent an evening at Rudraprayag. The evening was made even more special as we participated in the evening arti conducted by a priestess with long flowing hair dressed in a bright red sari.

The prasad at Kedarnath temple is saffron (which used to be sent here by the Raja of Kashmir in the old days), rice and daal, and khichdi. After being offered to the god, the prasad is distributed among the devotees. Other offerings include lotus flowers, rudraksh or small silver bilpatri or trishuls.

Rudranath Temple, named after Lord Shiva is situated at the confluence of the rivers Alaknanda and Mandakini at Rudraprayag. According to mythology Narada Muni invoked Lord Shiva here to teach him music. The Lord then appeared in his form of Rudra (Lord of Music). The rock known as Narada Shila where Narada is said to have worshipped Lord Shiva is at a truly spectacular setting right in the middle of the confluence.



En-route to Kedarnath



Rudraprayag

B|a|d|r|i|n|a|t|h

The Puranas chronicle the history of the Chardhaam (the four centres of pilgrimage) and the Four Yugas (eras). According to them, Badrinath belongs to the Satyug, Rameshwaram to the Tretayug, Dwarka to the Dwaparyug and Jagannath to the Kalyug. Though this shrine is located in the northern most part of India, the Chief Priest Ravalji - of Keralite (Namboodri) origins - performs the rituals. Procedures of daily pujas and rituals are supposed to have been prescribed by Adi Shankara.

Unlike most Hindu temples, all the pujas (including decoration of idols) are performed in the presence of all the devotees.



Sandal paste is distributed as Prasad along with a ghee-laced aromatic khichidi.



The stunning environs in which the temple is ensconced only adds to its appeal. Hearing the sounds of the bells and cymbals in a state between sleep and wakefulness, snuggled under a thick razai at the crack of dawn or the view of the huge aarti deepak being brought out in the inky darkness of the Himalayan night are etched in memory forever.

Brahma Temple

The story of Pushkar and its temple are intricately intertwined. According to the Padma Purana, Lord Brahma was in search of a suitable place to perform a yagna when the lotus he was holding fell from his hand and landed on the Earth. Infact the town is named after this little story as flower in Hindi is 'pushp' and hand is 'kar', therefore the land was named Pushkar. Miraculously a lake sprang up at the place where the Lotus had fallen and Brahma considering it a good omen decided to perform his yagna, there and then. When his wife Savitri failed to join him, he married a local damsel Gayatri and completed the ceremony. On getting to know about this, an enraged Savitri cursed Brahma that from this day forth he would be worshipped only in the land of Pushkar and nowhere else on Earth.

Sitting on the ghats surrounding the Kund on a pleasant winter evening and listening to stories about Pushkar and its importance in the Shradh rituals (performed for the souls of ancestors) or visiting the many cafes in the market that rustle up authentic continental fare epitomizes the study in contrast that Pushkar is. The Brahma temple at the end of a bustling and eclectic market is indeed one of its kind with never seen before deities and rituals, turtles and lots of silver coins embedded in the floor.





V a i s h n o d e v i

No longer the arduous trek of the past, the walk to the shrine of Vaishnodevi is dotted with options for food, rest, even entertainment, albeit of the holy kind! The mood of pilgrims is so uplifting and infectious that no one drags their feet. A steady chant of 'jai mata di' keeps spirits high and feet moving rhythmically onward.

Halfway through to the Devi's shrine is the cave 'Ardhikavati', that pilgrims must pass through. A popular belief holds that the goddess showed herself to the saint in this cave and lived here for 9 months. This 15 foot long cave thus came to be known as 'Garbha Jom'. Interestingly, the goddess shot her trident to make a new opening and escaped when Demon Bhairon came into the cave. At first glance it seems impossible that one can squeeze oneself through the narrow passage to emerge in one piece at the end of the tunnel, but we saw even the 'healthiest' of people accomplish this task.

Darshan of Vaishnodevi is considered incomplete without the feeding of the 7 kanchaks (pre-pubescent girls) symbolic of the Devi. The Prasad is black chana, sooji halwa and puri that also marks the end of the Navratri festival which falls twice a year during transition from winter to spring (March/April) and from summer to winter (October/November).



Navratri celebrations







It is usual in a Hindu temple to prepare foods that are first offered to the deities, and left in their presence for a while to satisfy their spiritual hunger. Thereafter the food becomes a sanctified prasad, which is distributed or even sold to the assembled devotees. Each temple has its own special prasad(s) established over a long period of time, and the quantities cooked daily at the popular temples are enormous. These temples often have huge dining areas to serve food to pilgrims."

- A. Parthasarthy



Bhoga Preparation



Preparing food for bhog is considered an honour and undertaken with loving tenderness. Preparation for cooking bhog is as important as the actual process of cooking and there are strict rules that have to be observed. Every temple has its own traditions but there are some general guidelines that are followed. Usually, the bhog is prepared by the male members of the family that is entrusted with the care of the deity. Bathing before entering the kitchen is mandatory.

The kitchen has to be washed and wiped dry before any preparation begins. The Brahmin cook wears a freshly washed single piece of clothing tied around the body loosely to facilitate movement. Most temple kitchens discourage talking whilst cooking (if there is more than one sewak) and often they are required to wear a thin mask covering the mouth and nose to maintain purity and hygiene.

The food being prepared must never be checked for accuracy of ingredients before it is offered and even if the aroma rising out of the boiling cauldrons is exquisite the thought that the dish must taste heavenly must not cross the mind.

Indeed, while bhaav is the most valuable ingredient in the preparation of bhog the other significant ingredient is 'Manorath' - that which is made according to the heart's desire of the cook - what he feels like serving the Lord.

Padmanath Das was a sincere but poor devotee. He had no means to buy the ingredients for exotic and rich bhog so he would soak white channas (chick peas) everyday, pile them up decoratively on a plate and offer them to Krishna with deep love. One day a few guests came to his humble abode and saw the bhog he was offering. They started laughing and mocked him saying "only channa?" when he brought the prasad to distribute.

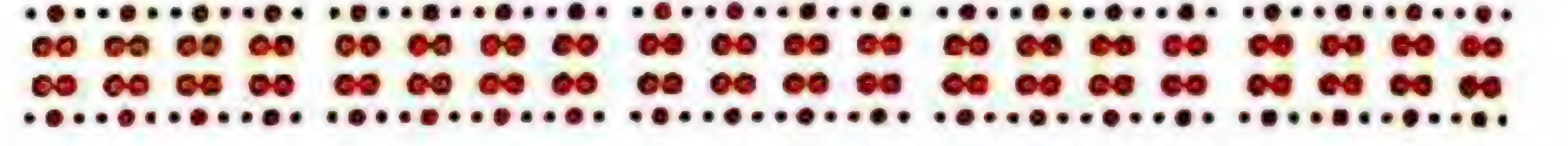
Padmanath Das did not blink an eyelid. Very lovingly he picked up one channa and holding it out to the guest said 'this is halwa'. Then he gave another chana saying 'this is jalebi', 'this is rasgulla', 'this is barfi'... and so on till all the chanas had been distributed. The guests laughed even more, shaking their heads. Still shaking their heads at his foolishness, they ate the chanas given to them as Prasad. Their mouths fell open in amazement as the taste in their mouths was not that of bland soaked chanas but the different sweets named by Padmanath Das while handing out the prasad. They fell at his feet saluting his pure bhaav.

The explanation for this miraculous change is that while the devotee was piling up the channas, in his heart each channa was a different sweet. It was the bhaav with which he offered the dish that decided the taste of the prasad. When Thakurji partook of the bhog he blessed each channa with the taste of his devotees' manorath.



Fuel

*Agnim prajwalitam vande jathavedam huthashanam
Suvarna varnamanalam samiddam vishwatomukham.*



Let the soul be purified, O God of fire
Let the food be pure, O Lord Keshava
Let us have the joy of feeding a million people.

Fire has special significance in Hinduism as with other belief systems since it is believed to be the purest of the five elements and indestructible. In Hindu mythology Agni is the messenger of God much like the Greek hero Prometheus who steals fire (the symbol of knowledge) from the Gods to give to man and immortalize him. In Hinduism the purification of the mind and spirit is even more important than the purification of the body. It is through meditation, acts of worship and goodwill to all humanity that this is achieved.

Yagya is one of the most significant forms of the Hindu act of worship. The sacred fire has a very special place in all Hindu religious ceremonies and all important endeavours are preceded by a havan.

During a Havan one is not praying to the actual fire. The fire, 'Agni' (in Sanskrit) denotes warmth and light and thus signifies God, who is radiant and bright, and leads us from darkness to light, untruth to truth, and death to immortality.

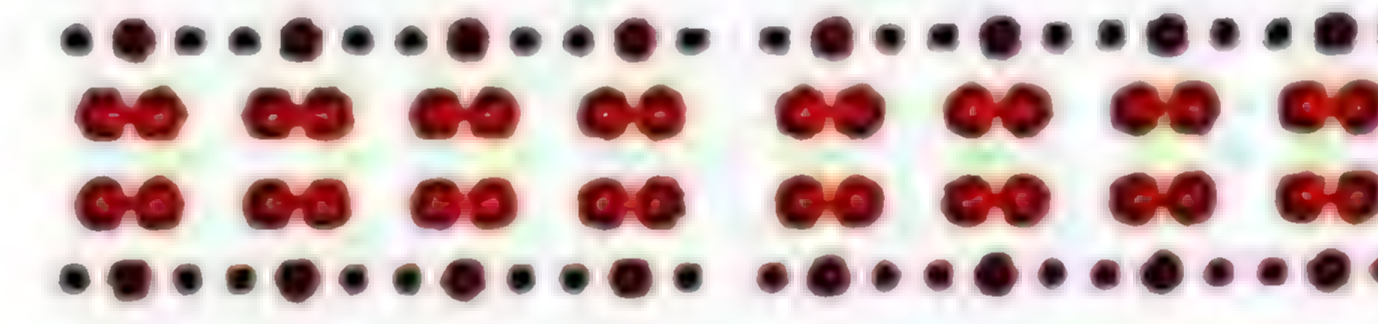
Marriages are sanctified with Agni as witness, the 'saat pheras' (7 circumbulations that the bride and groom take together) are around the fire.

After one dies the eldest son ignites the funeral pyre as the bodily remains are consecrated to the purifying flames. Myth also narrates how Sita had to undergo Agni Pariksha (test by fire) to prove her innocence to her husband Rama, having stayed with her abductor Ravan without a chaperone.

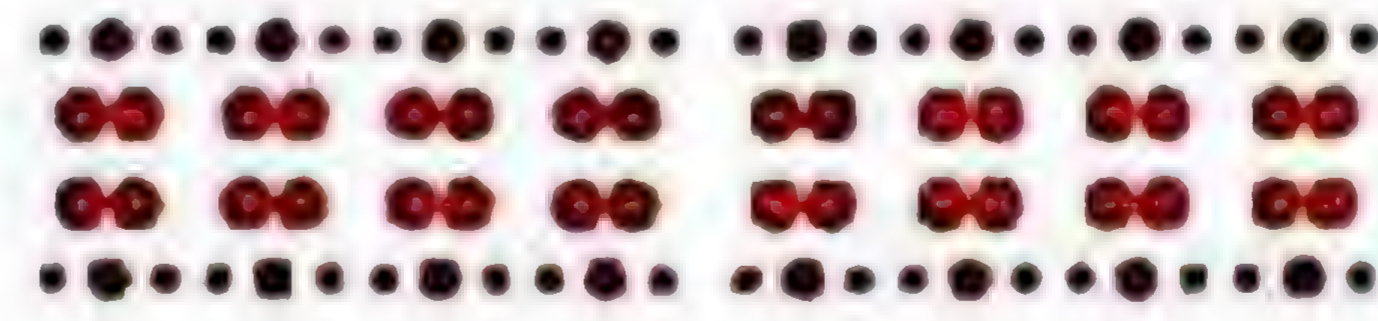
The source of fire used to prepare bhog is thus very important.



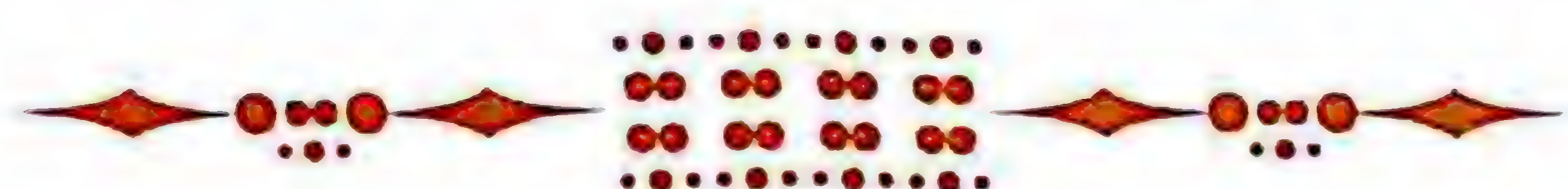
Tamarind logs



At Sri Krishna Temple, Udupi, firewood is stacked as a chariot called "KATTIGE RATHA" in Kannada. This stack consists of jungle woods, jack fruit (for its fiber base), mango and neem. They are layered in a unique way to look like a 'rath' or temple car. They are treated with lacquer to remove all traces of moisture.



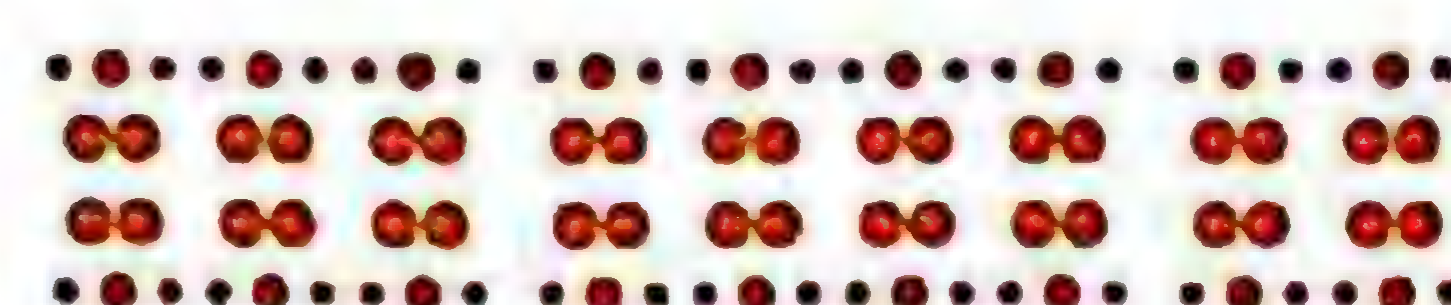
Wood fire is used in almost every temple but in many temples only the wood of a certain tree is used. In Guruvayoor the husk of the coconut fuels the fire used to cook bhog for the Lord while tamarind bark is used to cook food for the devotees. In Jagannath temple, Puri, the Daru tree bark is used. Daru literally means to erode or take away...in this case to take away all suffering as the Mahaprasad is reputed to have magical qualities of transformation.



A certain fuel is used in combination with a certain metal vessel because of the conduction factor. In most temples, steel and aluminum vessels are shunned, while copper, brass, bronze even silver in some cases is preferred, Tatiyasthan in Vrindavan continues to use clay utensils specially made in Kamvan.



At the Govindevi temple in Imphal wood with rice husk is used as fuel. Over this fire a metal tripod structure is placed and a handi is fitted into the center. While bronze handis were used originally these have been replaced by the lighter aluminium. A big metal clamp fits around the mouth of the handi with a holder to place and remove from the fire.

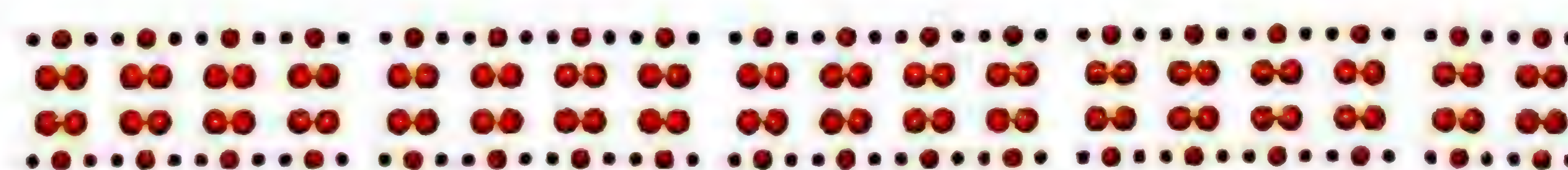


Before cooking bhog for the day in Jagannath temple commences, a havan is performed. The samagri or ingredients burnt in the holy fire/agni emit certain properties that cleanse and purify the atmosphere through their fumes, creating harmony, peace and friendship. A flame from this yagya is then used to light the stoves.

At the Radharaman Temple in Vrindavan there is an ever-burning flame and after a yagya ignited by this flame is performed it is used to ignite the wood fire for the preparation of Bhog for the day.

In Udupi the kitchen fire is kindled in an oven made of mud or bricks with an invocation to God to bless the fire to cook delicious naivedya.

After the fire is lit and the smoke disappears, sanctified rice is scattered over the fire to the accompaniment of a prayer invoking the Gods to bless the food with qualities to purify the soul of all the people who will be fed.



It is believed that Mahalakshmi herself cooks the food through the supakara who are only a medium. The pots bear the impression of the lotus leaf symbolic of Mahalakshmi. Jagannath temple in Puri has its own potters! Earthen handis are specially made for the temple by potters in kumara pada area.

Nakulo Bisoi an 80 year old potter continues his ancestral work in the 60 year old bhatti using mud from 'Dhan ki kiari' (a special kind of clay known to be very heat-resistant) for the pots.

I|n|g|r|e|d|i|e|n|t|s

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Hindu diet is the offering of food to God. After offering, it is no longer mere nutrition for one's body but becomes 'prasadam' - sanctified food - that nourishes one's body and soul. The simple act of eating becomes a profound act of devotion.

- A. Parthasarthy

Bhog should express the concepts of purity, devotion and non-violence. It should be easy to digest, pure and subtle. There is an emphasis on fruits, milk and nuts — often used innovatively.

A common denominator for all temples with regard to bhog is that it should nourish and feed not only the body but also the mind. Bhog in that sense is holistic - taking care of bodily and intellectual needs and thereby spiritual growth.

Based on the principles of ayurveda, the three kinds of dosas (constitutions) - kapha, vata and pitta correspond to 3 basic properties in food - satvic, rajasic and tamsic - tranquil, energetic and inert. Selection of ingredients and menu planning for Bhog is based on the wisdom of Ayurveda. Today validation of many ayurvedic principles by modern research makes it a treasure trove of wisdom.

The cycle of the seasons is a valuable guide to the selection of ingredients and one cannot go wrong if we use what is a typical natural product of that season. Interestingly some vegetables/fruits are available for only a very short time. Indeed we discovered sumptuous dishes derived from rare ingredients that have fallen out of use today due to their non-availability. Certain vegetables are taboo, e.g. tamsic ingredients like onion and garlic are shunned because they arouse the base emotions. Red hued vegetables like carrots and tomatoes are avoided because of their colour association with blood, while cauliflower and red chilies are also ignored as being difficult for the delicate satvik digestive system. Moreover, only locally grown ingredients are used and even potatoes known to be a Dutch import are excluded in many temples. In Jagannath temple the yam like 'mitti aloo' is used, for instance. While the day is divided into eight (unequal) sections for the purpose of worship and bhog, in many temples even this division is modified. Indeed timings are changed according to seasons as well as geography. Ingredients are used according to their suitability to the demands of the season, depending on the 'taseer' (attribute) of the ingredient. In the Northern part of India where winters are harsh, warming spices like jaiphal (nutmeg) or aromatics like kesar (saffron) are a must in winter and in humid areas like the East of India where infections are easy to catch, lavang (clove) renowned for its antiseptic properties is used often.

Temple Food is divided into Sakhri (Kaccha) which means non-fried with the addition of salt in cooking and Anasakhari (fried and salted after cooking).

Sathras or seven tastes — sweet, sour, bitter, salty, pungent, metallic and astringent are incorporated during the course of the day. An element of exotica is also added as the 'bhaav' is to offer something special. Ingredients are selected with utmost care keeping in mind quality and purity. Milk products for instance have to be made with cow milk alone. Similarly pure ghee made from cow milk is the preferred medium of cooking and if at all oil is used it is mustard oil, not refined oil. Ghee is considered ambrosial and an offering in itself.

The colour palette is considered while choosing a menu to make it aesthetic and visually appealing and a different raag or music composition accompanies the offering depending on the time of year and day.



Mind boggling array and play with flavor and ingredients eliminates any chance of a jaded palate. Some temples follow a 365 day menu ensuring a new one for each day!

Serving the Lord

Prayers urging the deity to partake of the offering /cajoling are an indispensable part of the serving. Special mantras are recited, flowers and incense create a colourful, fragrant ambience and bells tinkle along. Bhog is offered with great fanfare and celebration. It is a rare God indeed who would not be tempted to eat!



Food offered to the Gods is presented with flowers and fragrance creating an explosion of aromas and colours in symphonic harmony. It is not only the therapeutic value of the food that decides its selection but great emphasis is also laid on aesthetics : colour, texture and presentation on the serving dish are as carefully planned as the cooking process. Bhog is served with anand bhav (pleasure) for the anand (pleasure) of the deity. While there are many general considerations, some temples follow rituals that are unique to their sampraday. For example, at Jagannath Puri, water is placed in a thali and turmeric added to it and only after the reflection of the deity is seen does it mean that he has eaten. At Radharaman temple in Vrindavan, the paper put into the nose of the deity is removed only at mealtimes to make it easy for him to eat. A specific order is followed here with bhog offered simultaneously to Radha Ramanji and Saligramaji, then the same is offered to Radharani by when it converts into prasadi and is then shown to Gopalbhattiji. The first part of the bhog offering is food followed by a pan beeda which is later distributed as a special Prasad among devotees. Tulsi is an essential part of Bhog which is considered incomplete if tulsi leaves are missing. At Radharaman temple Chappan Bhog is prepared everyday.







Temples generally divide the day into 8 prahars of approximately three hours each and Bhog is offered in accordance with the season, time of day, and subsequent anticipated activity. The recipes are categorized according to this division rather than the usual categories of drinks, starters, main course etc.



Tulsi (Holy Basil)

Tulnaa naasti athaiva Tulsi - that which is incomparable (in its qualities) is the Tulsi.



No offering to the Lord can be made without Tulsi and on days that bhog may not be prepared for some reason, a Tulsi leaf offered with devotion is considered enough to satisfy the Lord's hunger.

For Hindus, it is one of the most sacred plants. In fact it is known to be the only thing used in worship which, once used, can be washed and reused in pooja - as it is considered to be self-purifying.

The importance of Tulsi can be gauged from this popular narrative.

Once Lord Krishna was being weighed in a balance with gold and other ornaments, to be distributed as charity amongst his subjects in Dwarka. Kilos and kilos were piled up but the balance wouldn't budge. In despair, the courtiers called Rukminiji who saw their distress and started laughing. She walked into the adjoining palace garden, plucked a single Tulsi leaf and brought it back. She placed it on the opposite balance and instantly the one bearing the Lord rose high into the air!



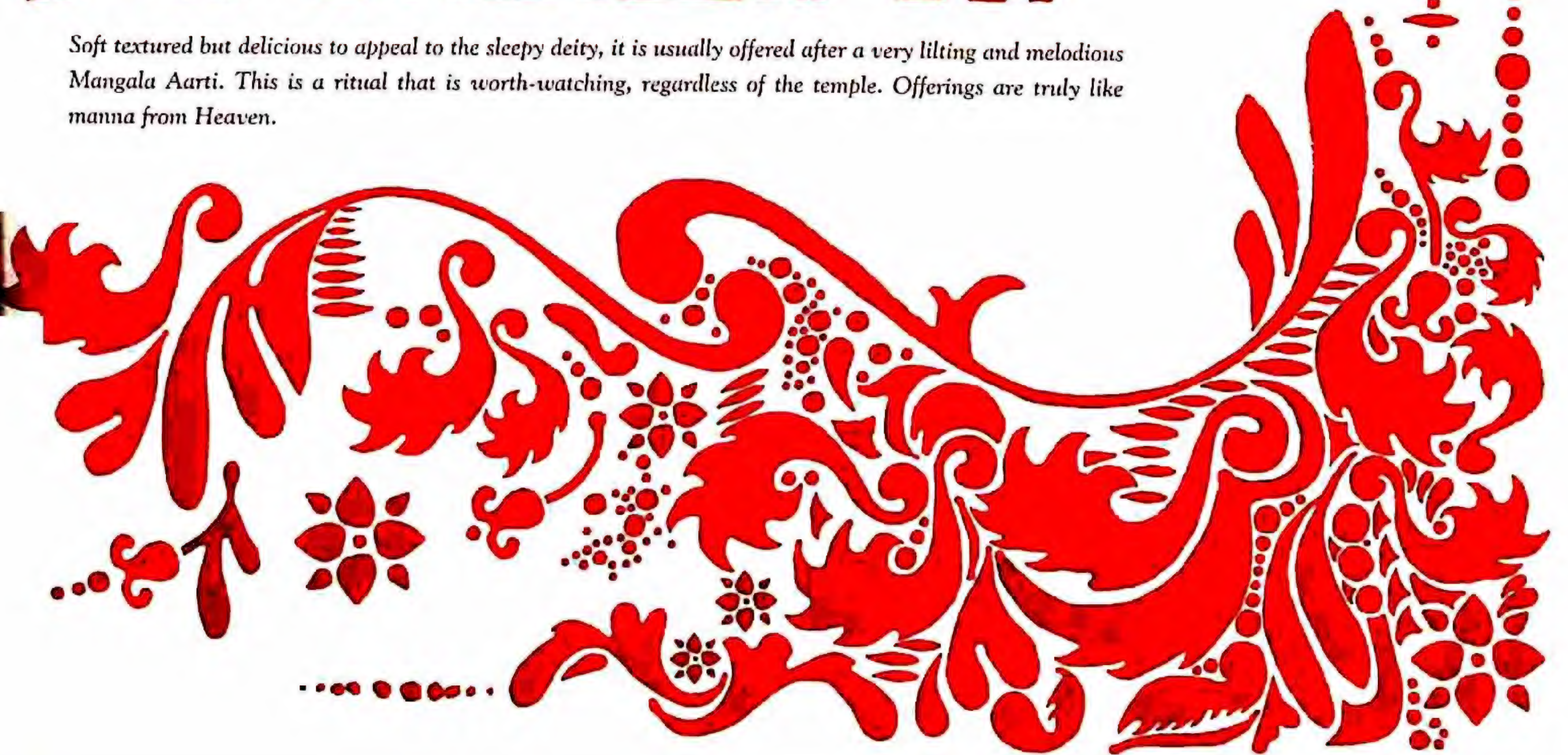
MANGALA

The deity is cajoled into wakefulness and the name Mangala (auspicious) underlines the importance of beginning the day with a glimpse of the Lord. This is the first Bhog of the day. After the long gap of the night, this bhog is considered the most important and must be both light as well as highly nutritious.



••• 05:00 am
••• to •••
••• 07:00 am

Soft textured but delicious to appeal to the sleepy deity, it is usually offered after a very lilting and melodious Mangala Aarti. This is a ritual that is worth-watching, regardless of the temple. Offerings are truly like manna from Heaven.



M a k h a n - m i s h r i



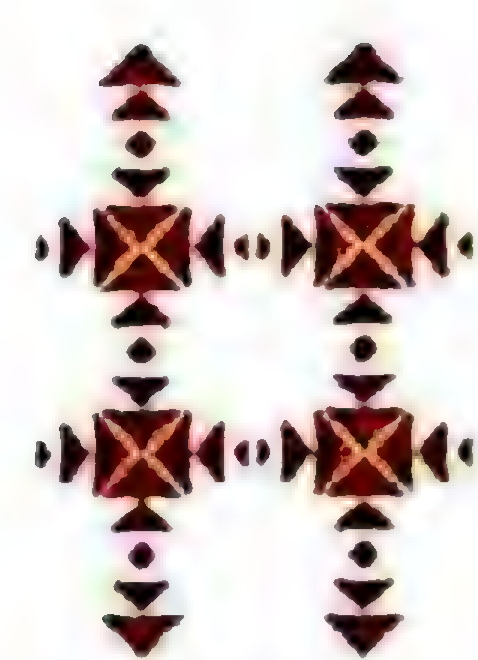
Traditionally served as mangala bhog in one form or the other in every temple makhan is what the mischievous child Krishna stole, earning the name 'makhan-chor'.

The symbology is interesting. Like butter has to be churned out of milk and rises, leaving the watery whey or buttermilk so also mankind must focus on extracting the essence of life-wisdom. However wisdom is so precious that it can only be 'stolen'.

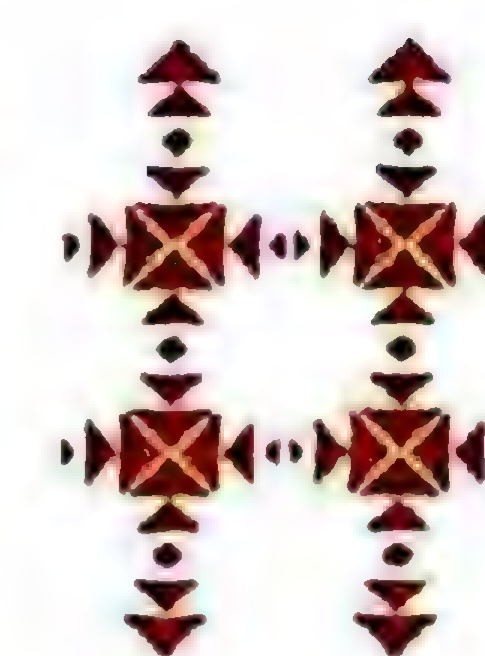


Nei Payasam (Ghee Rice)





As the name suggests this is a heavy meal as a significant quantity of ghee is used. It is considered the most apt first food not only during the day but also as annaprasam, i.e the first solid food given to a child, being subtly flavoured, mildly sweet, soft and fluffy in texture and easy to eat. The ghee makes it somewhat heavy so it is given early in the day to allow ample time for digestion. We loved the unexpected zing of jeera in this offering.



Ingredients

2 katoris rice (kerala red rice is the best option)
4 katoris jaggery (the fresh deep brown type is best)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp jeera
1 katori ghee



Method

Boil the rice in 3 times the quantity of water till just tender, adding more water if needed.

Drain off the excess and while the rice is piping hot add the ghee and mix well.

Melt the jaggery on a low flame and pour into the ghee rice mixing well.

Dry roast the jeera, crush very roughly and add.

Serve warm.

Mathri

Ingredients

½ kg coarsely ground whole wheat atta
150 gms ghee
Salt to taste
2 tsp til (sesame seeds) in winter (between Dassehra and Holi)
or
2 tsp jeera (cumin seeds) in summer
Ghee to fry

Method

Mix all the dry ingredients and rub the 150 gms ghee into the atta.
Bind with water into a hard dough and leave to rest for about half an hour.
Roll out into small puris of about ½ inch thickness. Prick roughly.
Heat ghee and check temperature by dropping in a tiny roundel of dough. If it rises quickly the ghee is just right.
Now slide in about 5-7 mathris at a time and fry on low flame till a nice brown in colour. Drain well and allow to cool before eating.



Meethi Mathri

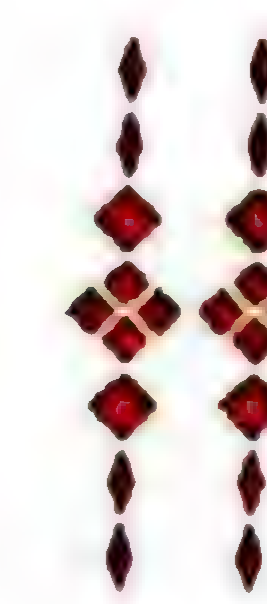


Ingredients

½ kg maida
150 gms ghee
Ghee to fry
2 katoris sugar
½ katori water
Cheenta (sprinkle) of kesar water (winter)
Or
Gulab jal (summer)



These are also traditionally given to the mother-in-law after the Karva Chauth fast observed by wives for the longevity of their husbands.



Method

Sieve the maida into a bowl and rub the ghee into the maida.
Pour in water a little at a time till a hard dough forms.
Cover with a damp cloth and allow to rest for about half an hour.
Put ghee into a kadhai on low flame.
Break off small roundels, roll out into puris of ¼ inch thickness, prick and drop into the hot ghee.
Fry on low flame till golden brown and crisp.
Leave to drain well.
Mix the water and sugar and heat till the sugar begins to whiten and become crumbly.
Quickly toss the mathris into the snowy sugar till lightly but well coated with it.
Leave to cool.
In winter, dissolve 10-12 strands of kesar in 2 tsp of milk and then sprinkle on the cooled mathris.
In summer, sprinkle gulab jal on the mathris.

Rice flakes (poha) have a special significance in Krishna mythology. The story goes that after Krishna leaves Brajbhoomi to fulfil his responsibilities in Dwarka, Sudama who was his childhood friend was missing him and he expressed this to his wife who urged him to visit Krishna and also tell him about their sorry plight and poverty. Sudama was hesitant but finally decided to go. On the day of his departure his wife handed him a small potli of poha and told him to gift it to his friend.

Sudama set off and on reaching Dwarka was so exhausted and dirty that the guards mocked his appearance and refused to believe that he was the King's friend and stopped his entry. Krishna of course saw what was happening and rushed to receive him with an open heart and open arms.

Sudama was so awe-struck at the grand palace that he very gingerly offered the potli of poha to his friend and refrained from telling him about his misery. Krishna was overjoyed to receive the pohe and ate it with visible enjoyment.

After spending a few wonderful days together, Sudama took leave of his friend. On reaching his home he was surprised to see that instead of his little hut there stood a palatial building. Thinking he had come to the wrong street he was about to turn away when he heard his wife's familiar voice call out to him. Surprised, he turned around to see her standing in the doorway dressed in rich silk and glittering ornaments. Sudama joined his hands in silent gratitude to his loving friend.

Jaggery coated rice flakes



At the Jagannath Temple the first Bhog of the day is called Gopala Vallab Bhog and consists of fresh coconut and ripe bananas. The second offering is popped rice flakes, both plain and jaggery coated. Traditionally the rice flakes are roasted in a hot kadhai with sand and stirred around with a small broom like implement till they begin to pop like corn.

Ingredients

- 2 katoris popped rice flakes
- 1 katori jaggery
- ½ katori water to make a syrup

Method

- Mix the water and jaggery and place in a kadhai on medium heat.
- Bring to a boil, then lower the flame and cook till thick.
- Toss in the rice flakes, stirring continuously till well coated.
- Remove and leave to drain and set till crunchy.

M a l a r



The first offering in Guruvayoor is a light and fluffy, dry cereal called malar made from paddy. The paddy is dried first in the sunlight and then in the moonlight. Then it is dry roasted in an earthen pot stirred delicately with a broomstick till it begins to pop like corn. The husk is removed and this fluffy cereal is offered along with tiny pieces of coconut and jaggery.

T r i m a d h u r a m

Along with the Malar which is dry, is this syrupy and highly energizing treat made with 3 (tri) ingredients.

Ingredients

- 1 ripe banana
- ½ fresh coconut, scrapped
- 40 gms jaggery
- Or
- 1 ripe banana
- 2 tsp Sugar
- 2 tsp Honey

Method

- Mash the banana well and mix with the rest of the ingredients.



Both Trimadhuram and Malar are very light, yet pack in very high energy and are perfect to eat first thing in the morning. Easy to digest, crunchy, yet soft and sweetened with jaggery or honey, the healthiest sweeteners.



M o h a n B h o g



Ingredients

50 gms coarse sooji
50 gms besan
150 gms gehun ka atta
250 gms sugar
250 gms cow ghee
1 litre water
Finely slivered dry fruits of your choice



The use of three kinds of atta (flour) adds texture and nutritive value to this bhog which is widely served all over Braj bhoomi.



Method

Make a syrup with the water and sugar and keep aside.
Heat ghee in a heavy bottomed big kadahi.
Add all the dry ingredients and roast till almond brown.
A characteristic warm nutty aroma should fill the room.
Lower the heat. Carefully and slowly pour in the syrup from one side of the kadhai, stirring vigorously and continuously to avoid lumps.
Turn up the flame and keep stirring till the syrup is absorbed and the ghee leaves the sides of the kadhai.
Serve up a fluffy hot large dollop sprinkled over with the dry fruits.

Halwa

Traditionally served at all Shiv-Shakti temples.



Ingredients

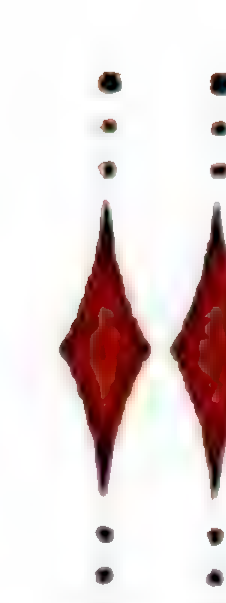
2 katoris coarse sooji
2½ katoris sugar
1¾ katori ghee
8 katoris water
2 tbsp each badam (almonds), pista (unsalted, shelled)
kishmish (golden raisin)

Method

Soak kishmish.
Blanch badam, peel and sliver.
Soak and skin pista and sliver finely.
Heat ghee in a heavy bottomed kadhai and fry badam.
Remove and drain well. Add sooji and fry till a soft brown colour. Lower flame.
Heat water and pour into the browned sooji very carefully as it will splutter.
Now pour in the sugar and mix very rapidly till all the water is absorbed and the sides start leaving the kadhai. Add the badam and kishmish and mix well.
Serve garnished with the pista.

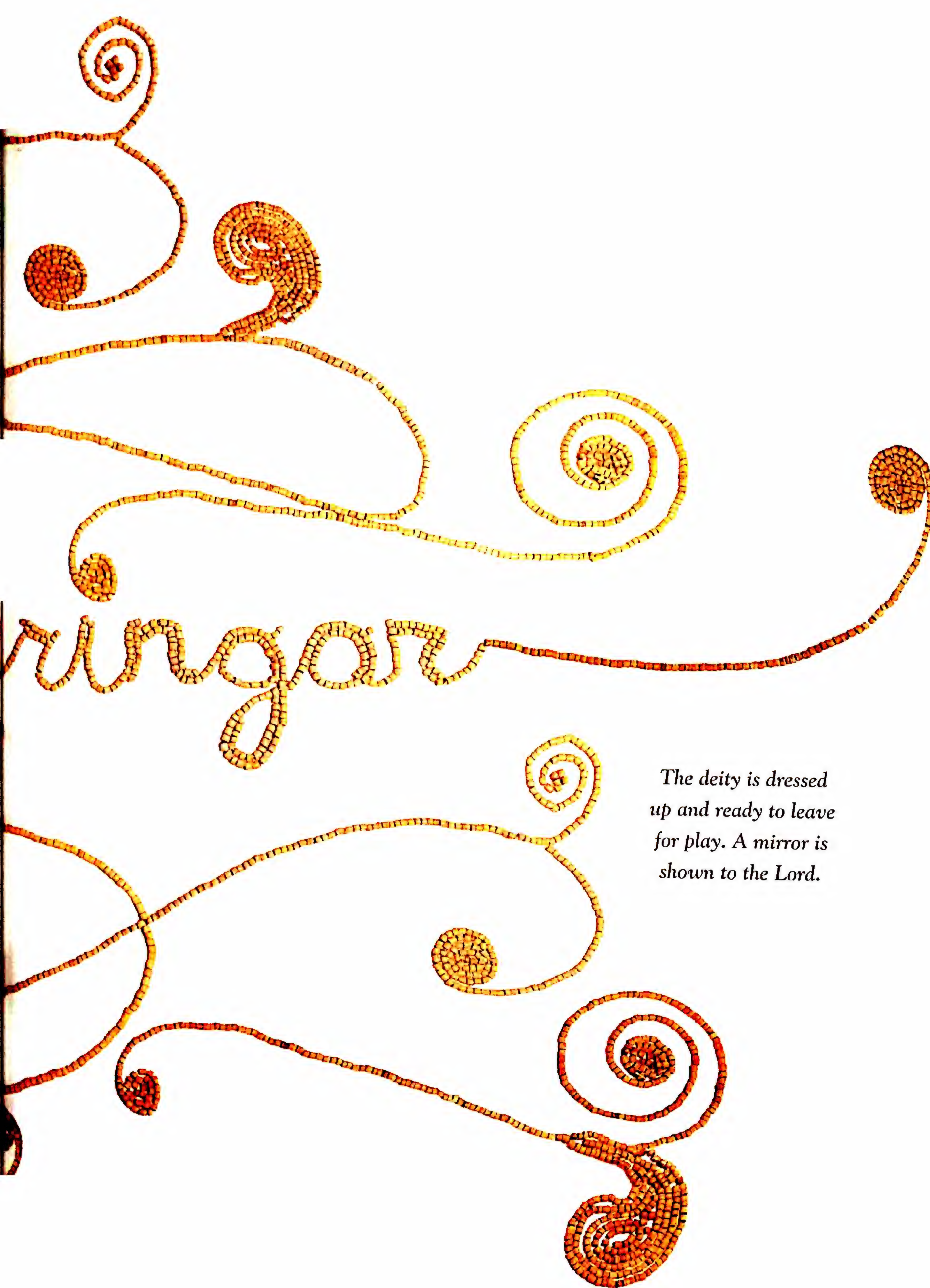


A hot dollop at 5.00 am on a cold winter morning, this was heaven!





••• 07:3
••• to •
••• 09:30



*The deity is dressed
up and ready to leave
for play. A mirror is
shown to the Lord.*

P e d a

Using the basic ingredients of khoya and mishri or sugar an astonishing variety of pedas are made depending on how long the khoya is roasted and on the addition of flavours.



K h o y a

This is essentially reduced or condensed milk. Heat 1 litre of milk and allow it to boil continuously till it is thick and reduced to a paste like consistency. Remove from heat and beat well to cool and avoid lumps. It will thicken further. Use as required.

B a s i c P e d a

Ingredients

Khoya made from 2 litres milk (about 2 katoris)
½ katori khand (desi/local powdered sugar)
½ tsp choti elaichi powder

Method

Put khoya into a kadahi and move around till it begins to turn pink.

Add about 2 tsp sugar and continue to fry till it leaves the sides of the kadahi.

Remove from heat and add remaining sugar and elaichi powder and mix well.

Allow to cool till comfortable to handle and break off roundels and shape into small patti like shapes with a slight depression in the center.

For Kesar pedas add 10-12 strands of kesar soaked in milk along with the elaichi powder.

You could also add a few drops of yellow colour.

After the Lord is adorned for the day an offering of Pakwaan made with milk - peda, barfi - is made.

Safed Peda

These are a speciality of the Majathia Mahal Pushtimargi Sthan in Mumbai. Sweeter than usual and with an interesting hard texture these are meant to be carried as prasad to far away destinations as they keep well.



Ingredients

- 1 katori khoya
- ½ katori safed khand or boora
- ½ tsp choti elaichi powder

Method

Choose a stainless steel kadahi. Aluminium is not to be used.

Wash and scrub well and place to heat.

Mix the khand and khoya and put into the hot kadahi.

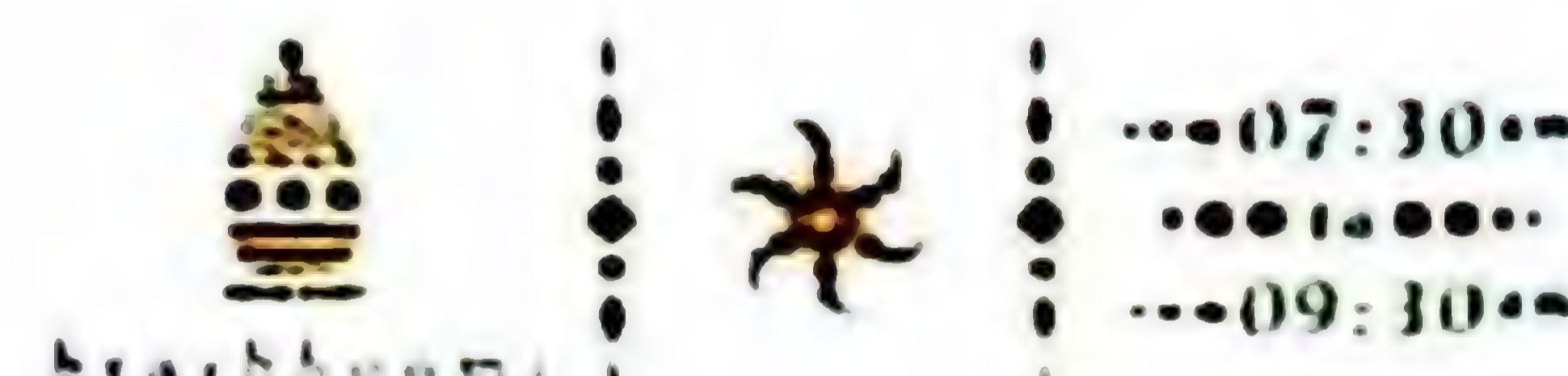
The flame should be high and mixing very rapid so that the khoya mix melts and cooks but does not change colour at all. Once the mixture begins to leave the sides of the vessel, remove from heat and add elaichi powder.

Mix well and leave till cool enough to handle.

Break off a walnut sized ball and flatten into a disc shape.

Leave to set and harden.

Mathura ke Pede



Chocolate coloured and sugar dusted mounds of these soft and exceptionally delicious pedas are available all over Braj bhoomi as they are Lord Krishna's favourite sweet and a must offering by devotees. These also keep very well because of the enhanced cooking time and browning process.

Ingredients

- 2 katoris khoya
- 1 katori khand
- ½ katori boora
- 1 tsp choti elaichi powder
- ½ katori milk
- 1 tsp ghee

Method

Roast khoya with the ghee on a moderate flame till it changes colour.

Now add 1/3rd katori khand and keep stirring till the khoya becomes a deep chocolate brown.

If the khoya sticks to the bottom of the kadahi sprinkle a little milk and continue stirring vigorously.

Remove from heat and add the rest of the khand and elaichi powder.

Mix well and shape into flatish ladoo shapes. Dust with the boora and serve.



Srinathji Shringar by Shaan Bhatnagar



Barfi

Almost a generic term for one of the most popular sweets made in households or sold in mithai shops. From the simple sada barfi to the exotic chocolate or rich kesar pista and fruit barfis there is one to allure every palate. At Shringhar Bhog though, the simplest form is offered. Made from the same ingredients, pedas and barfis differ primarily in texture because of the process of cooking.

Ingredients

½ kg milk khoya
200 gms mishri

Method

Grate or crumble the khoya and mix in the mishri.
Heat in a kadahi on medium flame till it starts to leave the sides of the vessel.
Pour into a greased thali and leave to set.
Cut into chunky squares.
To a basic barfi, a variety of ingredients can be added:
100 gms Badam – soaked and ground and added while roasting the khoya.
50 gms chopped pista added after taking off the flame.
10 strands kesar soaked in a tsp of milk, after taking off the flame.
50 gms candied pineapple after taking off the flame.

Kuliya

The ambrosial Prasad at Radha Raman temple in Vrindavan, it gets its name from the tiny earthen pots it is set in. Usually called 'Kuliya Prasad', we love scooping out the soft grainy texture with our fingers.



Ingredients

6-8 kuliyas (small earthen pots)
2 kgs milk
250 gms mishri
6-8 pods of green elaichi crushed
A few strands of kesar
2 tsp finely minced pista

Method

Soak the kuliyas in water for 4-5 hours.
Remove from the water and rinse.
Leave to dry.
Heat the milk in a thick kadahi and continue cooking on a medium flame till reduced to a thick grainy consistency.
Add the crushed mishri, elaichi and kesar and mix well.
Fill into the kuliyas and sprinkle with minced green pista.

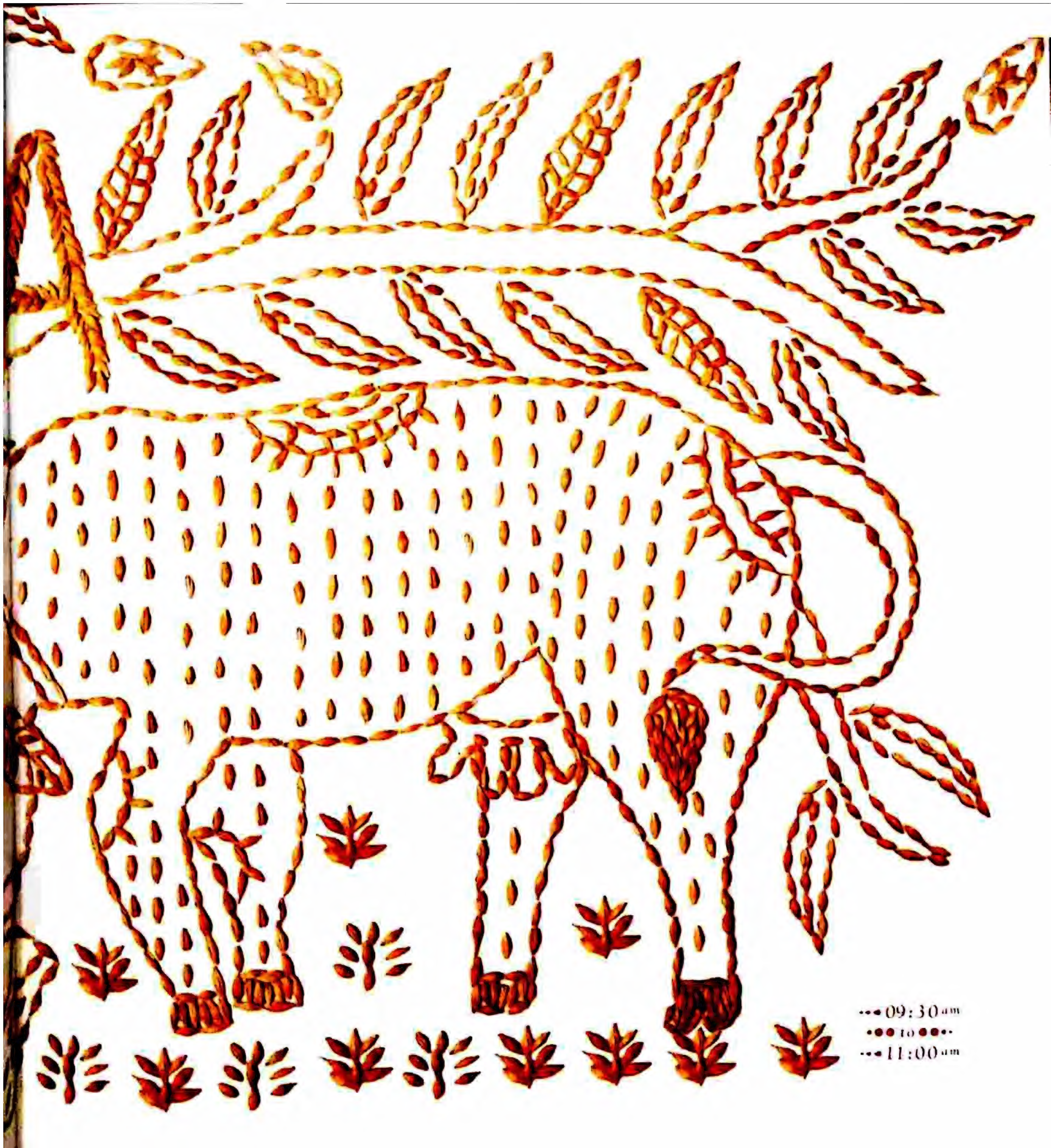
A decorative border of wheat stalks, rendered in a golden-brown color, runs along the top and sides of the page. The stalks are arranged in a repeating pattern, with some showing the grain and others showing the leaves.

GWA

Small offering before preparation to take the cattle out to graze. Also called Madhyahn

BHOD

W



--- 09:30 am
●●● 10:00 am
... 11:00 am

Jhaag Doodh



Summer

Ingredients

- 1 glass cool milk
- 1 tsp crushed mishri
- 1 choti elaichi powdered
- Tiny pinch baras (refined peppermint)
- 2-3 ice cubes

Method

Dissolve all the ingredients except ice in the milk.
Pour the milk several times over the ice cubes till it is chilled and frothy.
Serve at once.

Winter

Ingredients

- 1 glass freshly boiled milk
- 1 tsp crushed yellow mishri
- 1 pod choti elaichi powdered
- A few strands kesar soaked in milk
- Pinch of jaiphal-javatri powder

Method

Make sure the milk is piping hot and put all the ingredients into it. Pour from one glass to the other rapidly creating a light froth till it reaches a sippable temperature.
Serve at once.

Dhuan Chaach

A delightful variation of the regular chaach, characterised by the earthy smoky flavour of the smouldering upala. This recipe can be served in winter as well as the smoking process 'warms' the ingredients.



Ingredients

250 gms chaach
1 tsp sendha namak
A good pinch strong hing
1 gobar ka upala (cowdung cake)
1 tbsp ghee

Method

Mix the salt into the chaach.
Ignite the upala, sprinkle hing over the smouldering upala and pour ghee over it.
Invert a medium vessel over this to collect the smoke.
Quickly turn over and immediately pour in the salted chaach and cover to entrap the smoky flavour.
Leave for at least 10 mins.
Uncover and serve immediately.

Ch a a c h

Mattha, chaach or buttermilk is the left over after the butter is churned and collected. It is very light yet nutritious and has cooling and digestive properties.



Ingredients

- 1 glass chaach
- ¼ tsp sendha namak
- A pinch of freshly ground kali mirch
- A good pinch of blackened, crispy jeera
- Or
- ¼ tsp sarson seeds
- 1 sprig curry patta if using sarson

Method

If using jeera, simply stir in the salt and kali mirch into the chaach and mix well, then sprinkle crushed jeera.

For sarson heat a drop or two of ghce, add seeds and curry patta and add to salted chaach.

Serve at room temperature.



Variously called sheera or lapsi these are a mixture of cereal and milk, sweetened with gur (jaggery) or mishri. They are perfect for Balgopal (baby Krishna) to begin the day with.

B e s a n S h e e r a

Ingredients

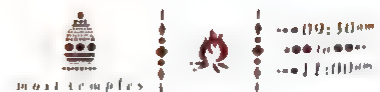
- ½ katori coarse besan made from chane ki dal
- ¼ katori ghee
- 2 katoris milk
- ½ - 1 katori mishri or gur depending on how sweet you want it
- 3-4 pods crushed choti elaichi
- 1 tsp chopped badam and pista



Method

Roast the besan in ghee till it changes colour and becomes fragrant.

Pour in the milk slowly to avoid lumps and when it begins to boil add the mishri/gur, elaichi and nuts. Cook till thick and serve warm.



Thooli Lapsi



Ingredients

- 1 katori thooli (dalia/cracked wheat)
- 2½ katoris unboiled milk and 1 katori water
- ½ katori mishri
- 2-3 pods crushed choti elaichi
- 1 tsp sliced badam and pista
- 1 tbsp ghee

Method

- Heat ghee and fry thooli till golden.
- Pour in the milk and water and add elaichi and nuts.
- Reduce flame and simmer covered till it thickens.
- Now add mishri and cook till it dissolves.
- Serve warm.
- Gur (jaggery) can be used instead of mishri for a more earthy flavour.
- Grate into the softened thooli and cook till it melts in.

Rava Lapsi



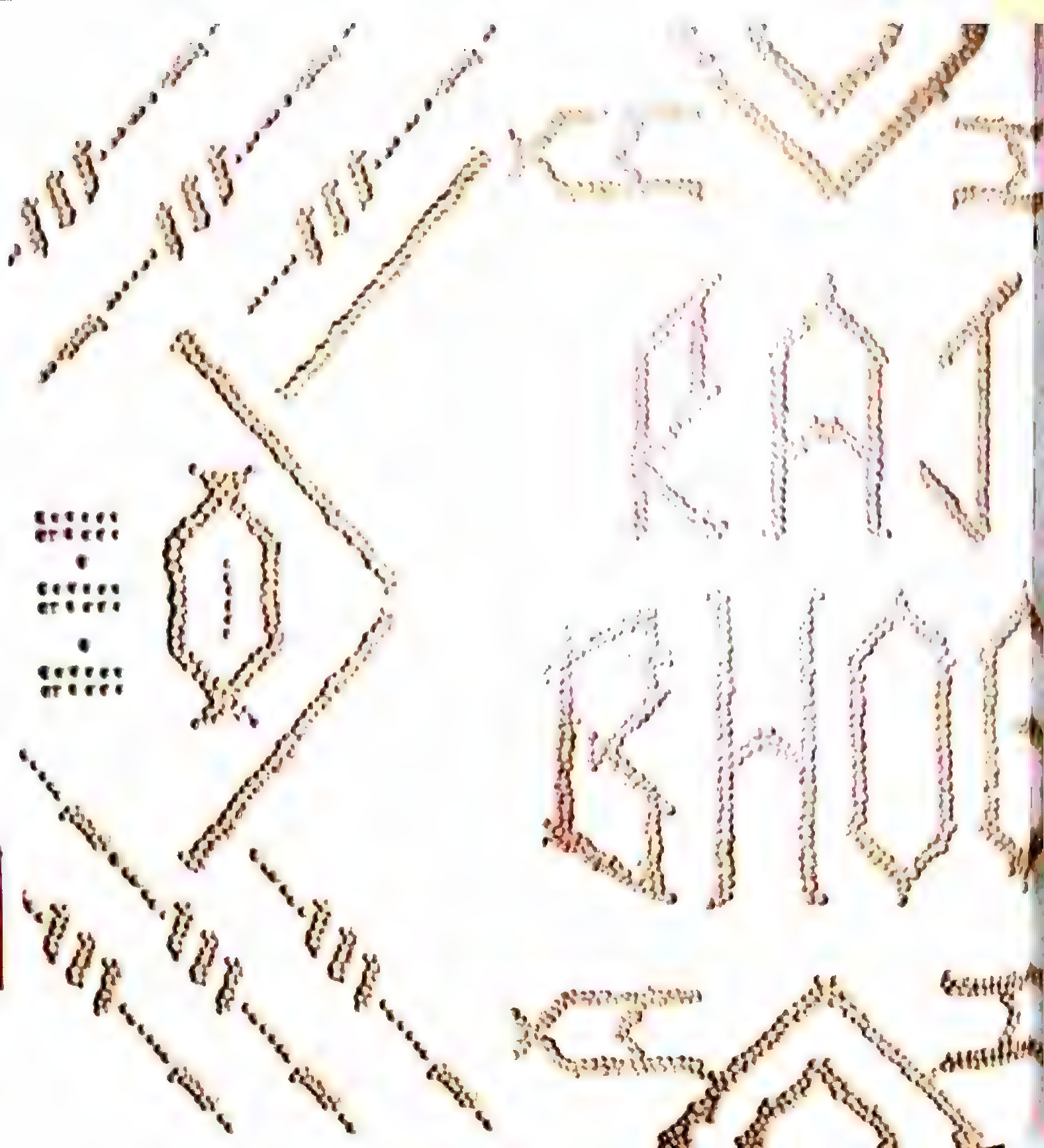
Ingredients

- 1 katori sooji
- 1 katori sugar
- 4 katoris milk
- ¼ katori ghee
- ½ tsp choti elaichi powder
- 1 tsp finely chopped badam and pista

Method

- Fry suji with ghee until it changes colour.
- When it become golden brown add hot milk.
- When rava soaks up the milk then add sugar and take it off the fire.
- Mix in elaichi powder and nuts and serve.





The main meal of the day after which the deity takes an afternoon siesta, it is balanced and complete in every way. Comprising largely of 'kaccha bhujan' (cooked in water with the addition of salt), it is considered incomplete without two kinds of vegetable - one dry and one with gravy. The recipes cover the entire gamut of offerings but to put together daily Rajbhog choose at least one from each of the categories.

••• 11:30 am
 ••• to •••
 ••• 12:00 noon

KHEER AND PAYASAM



Kheer with Black Rice



11-30am
12-00

❖❖ In the Goundarji temple in Imphal, kheer is served with a small portion of black rice. The contrasting colours are a visual treat while the
❖❖ complementing textures tease the palate. The chewy black rice perfectly tempers the soft sweetness of the traditional kheer.



Ingredients

1 kg milk powder
5 litres water
2 kgs rice picked, washed and soaked
2 kgs sugar
Pinch camphor
3-4 pods crushed green elaichi powder
A handful of raisins
2 tsp blanched and sliced badam
2 tsp blanched and sliced pistas
2 tsp finely chopped fresh coconut/
2 tbsp coconut powder soaked in 2 tbsp of water

Method

Mix the milk powder in 5 litres of water and bring to a boil.
Add the rice and simmer till it is very soft. Keep stirring and mashing against the sides of the pan.
When the milk and rice are a heavy cream consistency, add the sugar and mix well till it dissolves.
Take off the gas and add the nuts, dry fruit and aromatics.
Pour into a flat dish and cool to room temperature before serving with a portion of black rice.

Black Rice

Deep purple rather than black in colour due to the high content of anthocynins this was also called 'forbidden rice' as it was consumed only by the Chinese emperors and not available to commoners. A high protein and carbohydrate quotient makes it very healthy but difficult to digest so it is served in very small portions. We were firmly denied a second helping.

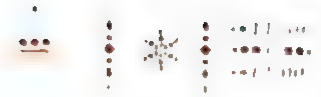
Ingredients

1 katori black rice
6-7 katoris water

Method

Pick, wash and soak the rice for half an hour.
Bring the water to a boil and tip in the rice.
Cook till soft and drain the remaining water.
Serve with kheer.

Navakam Payasam



The bananas are a speciality of Kerala and add a delicate flavour to the Payasam

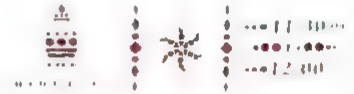
Ingredients

- 2 katoris rice
- ½ kator ghee
- 4 katoris jaggery
- 2 nenthripazham plantains (a special long banana known for its sweetness)
- 1 fresh coconut scraped or cut into small pieces

Method

Boil rice till soft above and mix in ghee and jaggery. Allow to cool slightly before mixing in the coconut and the banana cut into small pieces. Serve at room temperature or slightly cooler.

Pal Payasam



Watching the preparation of pal payasam in the ancient environs of the Guruvayoor temple was an unforgettable sight. The story goes that pal payasam made with 800 liters of milk gets ready in a mere half hour...an impossible feat by any standards...and possible only because of His blessings. The sight of the huge brass cauldron bubbling over a raging fire of dry coconut husks and stirred lovingly with long brass karchis by dhoti clad sewaks is unforgettable. The smoky coconut husk flavor is impossible to replicate so for the exact taste, texture and flavor of the pal payasam at Guruvayoor, you would have to travel there! This comes a close second though.

Ingredients

- 1 katori rice (small grain and fragrant - like govind bhog is best)
- 1½ katoris boora or sugar
- 3 litres milk
- 5-6 crushed choti elaichi
- Handful of badams soaked
- Handful of kishmish

Method

Put the milk to boil with the elaichi preferably in a heavy brass patila. Separately cook the rice till soft and add to the boiling milk which should have thickened slightly by now. Cook together on low flame stirring occasionally and mashing against the sides of the patila. When thick but not lumpy add the boora and kishmish. Peel and cut the badams into thin strips and add to the payasam. Tastes best at room temperature.



Palada

A special payasam made with steamed rice powder.

Ingredients

400 gms rice powder

350 gms sugar

1½ litres milk

Water as required

2 banana leaves lightly smeared with ghee

Method

First make the ada.

Mix enough water in the rice powder to make a spreadable paste.

Pour in strips on the banana leaves and roll up the leaves securing with strings.

Keep a large patila of water to boil and place the rolled leaves on a steamer above it or on a sieve and cover.

Steam for about an hour or so and then remove and unroll the leaves.

Scrap the ada from the leaf and drop into clean water.

Rub them well and then leave to drain. Put milk to boil on a medium flame.

Once it thickens slightly, cut the ada into small pieces and drop into the boiling milk.

Cook till well mixed and add the sugar.

Take off the gas and serve warm.



Erriti Payasam



The prized Nei Payasam with prize winning Kanan

Erriti means double. This recipe uses two different kinds of ingredients for the base of the payasam.

Ingredients

400 gms rice

800 gms jaggery

3 coconuts scraped and soaked in water

Method

Extract coconut milk by squeezing out the water in which they were soaked.

Boil the rice till soft and melt the jaggery.

Mix the two well and then pour in the coconut milk and mix.

Serve at room temperature.

Paradi Paayasa

Ingredients

1 katori raw rice

1 katori jaggery powder

2 katoris coconut milk

¼ katori maida

½ tsp cardamom powder

¼ tsp namak

½ katori water

Method

Soak rice in water for 1 hour. Wash and drain the water.

Grind this with salt to a fine paste a little thinner than idli batter consistency.

Mix maida into the batter.

Mix water and jaggery and boil till syrupy.

When it starts boiling pour the rice-maida batter on a perforated plate (used for making boondli) and drop it in the jaggery syrup.

When boondis are cooked, add coconut milk and cardamom powder.

Do not boil after adding coconut milk. Serve hot.



Manorama Paayasa

Literally meaning pleasing to the senses. This is indeed a very delicate and aromatic payasam.

Ingredients

250 gms badam
50 gms maida
1 litre milk
½ tsp choti elaichi powder
½ katori mishri
8-10 strands kesar soaked in a little milk

Method

Soak badams in hot water for sometime and peel.
Grind the badams with a little water to a fine paste.
Add maida till the batter reaches dosa batter consistency.
Bring the milk to boil. Pour the paste on a perforated spoon used for preparing boondi.
Drop it in boiling milk. When these droplets get cooked, add sugar.
When the sugar melts, add kesar and elaichi powder.
Serve hot or cold.
This tastes equally good both ways.



Kheer in a glass

At the Radha Raman temple in Vrindavan where we had the good fortune of partaking of the Raj-bhog prasad there were standing (and strict) instructions that no water, only kheer be consumed during the meal. When the kheer is so exquisite... light yet creamy and of a drinkable consistency, why bother with water?

Ingredients

1 litre full cream cow milk
40 gms good quality rice
100 gms sugar
4 pods choti elaichi roughly crushed
10 green pistas unsalted very finely sliced or finely crushed
5 badams blanched and skinned and very finely sliced

Method

Boil together milk, rice and choti elaichi on medium heat.
Keep stirring to avoid lumps.
When the rice softens, mash some grains against the side of the vessel and the mixture will turn creamy.
Now add the sugar and nuts and continue stirring till all the sugar dissolves.
Ideally the kheer should be cooked in a copper or bronze vessel. Serve luke warm or at room temperature in a glass.



RICE DISHES

Naivedyam means offering of plain rice.

Fluffy white rice

Pick and wash 500 gms of fragrant basmati rice and leave to soak about 10 mins. Put 2 litres of water to boil. Add a tsp of sendha namak (optional). When the water boils add the drained rice. Make sure that you stir the boiling rice at regular intervals. Allow to cook till the rice is just tender. Then topple the entire contents into a sieve and make sure all the water drains out. Pour over a generous ladle of pure cow ghee as you serve.



Ghee Arno



••• 1 1/2 : 30 min
••• 1 1/2 : 30 min
••• 1 1/2 : 30 min



We tried this rather plain looking dish very hesitantly and were pleasantly surprised at the burst of flavour from the zesty oranges.



Ingredients

1 kg rice (flavourful govind bhog rice)
250 gms ghee
Juice of 4 green oranges (native to Puri)
Namak to taste - about 1 tsp
Water as required

Method

Set a large vessel of water to boil.
Pick, wash and soak the rice for about 10-15 mins.
Drain well and put into boiling water.
Continue boiling on moderate heat till about 95 % cooked, then drain off most of the water, leaving only as much as will be absorbed by the rice.
Add half the quantity of ghee and namak and cover till rice is very tender but fluffy.
Squeeze the juice of the green oranges (use ordinary slightly sour ones if the ones from Puri are not accessible).
Once the rice is completely cooked turn off the gas and add the juice and remaining ghee.
Fluff up the rice and cover for a few minutes for the flavours to develop.

KHICHDI

Khichdi is an integral part of bhog all over India, in every temple. It was a pleasant surprise indeed to discover that rather than the 'paste', as one temple cook called the khichdi made in North Indian homes as an offering to the indisposed, khichdi making is an art, producing a flavourful and refreshing meal in itself. Each region has its own method and uses a different daal. A variety of khichdi recipes are included to choose from.



Khichdi 1



Prepared in a wide variety of ways, khichdi is versatile and can be a rich repast or food for a sick person, depending on the ingredients. This recipe is a basic but aromatic one for everyday offering. Ideally the khichdi should be cooked in a copper, earthen or bronze handi over a moderate flame.

Ingredients

1 katori rice
1 katori moong chilka daal
8 katoris water
Sendha namak to taste
¼ tsp haldi powder
¼ tsp heeng powder

For tadka

2 tbsp ghee
1 tsp jeera
½ tsp rai
Pinch heeng
¼ tsp kali mirch powder
1 tsp finely julienned adrak

For garnish

Small bunch finely chopped hara dhania
2 tbsp hot ghee

Method

Wash and pick the rice and daal and put to boil on moderate flame with salt, haldi and heeng.

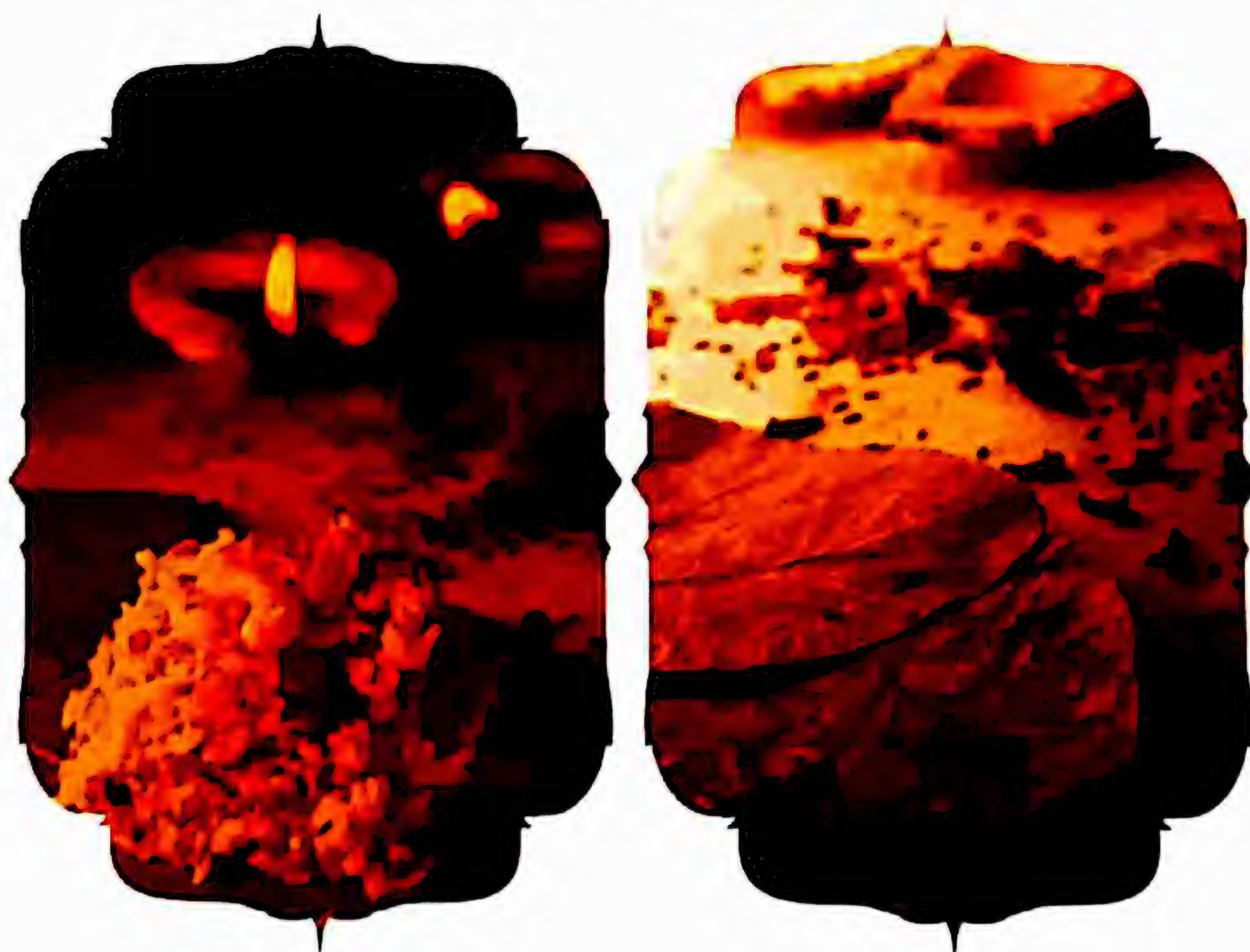
Make sure the vessel is covered.

This will take a while as the rice and daal need to be very well mixed. Remove from heat when well amalgamated.

Heat ghee and add jeera, heeng, rai, kali mirch and adrak.

Sauté till brown and pour over cooked khichdi.

Serve garnished with the dhania and hot ghee.



Khichdi 2



Ingredients

1 katori rice
¼ katori Moong chilka daal
¼ katori ghee
1-inch piece adrak, grated
A pinch of heeng
1 tsp whole jeera
½ tsp dhania powder
About 3½ katoris water
Salt to taste
Pinch sugar
2 tsp kishmish
2 tsp badam, soaked, peeled and slivered

Method

Pick and wash rice and daal and keep to boil with salt and sugar.

When about 50% done check the rice for tenderness and add a little more water if required. Also add dry fruits.

At about 90% readiness drain off excess water if any, and add the grated adrak and heeng and finally most of the ghee, keeping aside about a tbsp.

Continue to cook till the rice and dal are tender but fluffy. There should be a delicious moistness to the prepared khichdi.

Heat the remaining ghee and add the jeera and dhania till they splutter.

Pour over the khichdi and cover for a few minutes before serving.

Khichdi 3

Ingredients

1 katori rice
¼ katori urad dhuli daal
¼ katori matar (green peas)
1 tsp whole jeera
¼ tsp haldi powder
2-3 tej patta
1 tsp khichdi masala
¼ katori ghee
Namak to taste

Method

Pick and wash rice and dal.
Heat a tsp of ghee and add jeera, haldi and salt.
Toss in the green peas and a katori of water and cook till the peas are tender.
Now add the rice and dal, tej patta and 2 katoris of water and cook till tender.
When done, heat the rest of the ghee, add khichdi masala and pour into the khichdi and cover.
Serve with aloo chonkha.

The aloo chonka makes all the difference. To make, boil and mash two potatoes. Add chopped hara dhania, hari mirch, namak and 1 tsp raw sarson ka tel (mustard oil). Eat warm.

Namak Khichdi

At the Jagannath temple in Puri khichdi is made both sweet (kanika) and salted, hence the defining nomenclature.

Ingredients

1 katori rice
¼ katori moong dhuli daal
3 katoris water
1 inch piece adrak - grated
Good pinch heeng
Namak to taste
¼ katori ghee
2-3 tej patta

Method

Wash daal and rice well and set to boil with 3 katoris water, namak and tej patta.
Check for fluffiness and water at 50% readiness adding more if needed.
When rice and daal are tender but fluffy take off gas.
There should still be some water content.
Heat ghee and add heeng and adrak. Pour over the ready khichdi.

Chane ki daal ki Khichdi

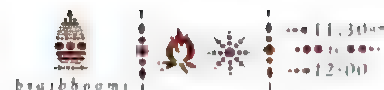
Ingredients

1 katori chana daal
1½ katori rice
1 katori chopped mixed vegetables
(kashiphal, palak, ghiya, etc.)
¼ tsp haldi
½ tsp kali mirch
¼ tsp lavang
Sendha namak to taste
½ katori ghee
½ katori chopped hara dhania
¼ tsp jeera

Method

Wash and soak daal and rice separately for 15 minutes.
Drain well.
In a deep patila put a layer of rice, then daal and then the vegetables.
Repeat the layers.
Heat a tbsp of the ghee and pop in the jeera, kali mirch and lavang and put into 5 katoris of water and slowly pour this water into the patila.
Add namak.
Put on a medium flame and cook covered till tender.
Remove from heat and pour over the rest of the ghee and chopped hara dhania.
Serve hot.

Meva Bhaat



One of the numerous varieties of rice offered at utsavs, the rice is boiled till very soft keeping in mind that a child's palate is being pampered.

Ingredients

1 katori fragrant rice (Govind Bhog was recommended)

Water to boil

A few strands of kesar

3 tsp kishmish

3 tbsp ghee

10 badams blanched and very finely slivered

10 green pistas very finely minced

2 katoris mishri

3 green elaichis finely powdered

A splatter of gulab jal (summer)

A sprinkle of jaiphal-javitri powder (winter)

Method

Boil rice in a generous quantity of water till very soft.

Drain well.

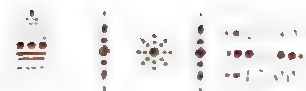
Heat ghee and add all the dry fruits and kesar.

Mix in the rice and mishri.

Mix with a light hand till mishri dissolves and take off gas.

Sprinkle with elaichi powder and appropriate sugandhi as per season.





Shrikhand Bhaat

Refreshing, light and very cooling in summer

Ingredients

- 1 katori rice
- 3 katoris full cream dahi
- 2 katoris mishri
- 1 tsp choti elaichi powder
- Good pinch baras
- 2 tbsp gulab jal
- 5-6 strands kesar

Method

Boil the rice in a generous quantity of water till very soft.
Put the dahi into a white muslin cloth and hang to drain the moisture.
Drain the rice and add the mishri.
Allow the mishri to dissolve into the rice.
When cool, beat the dahi till very smooth and add to the rice.
Mix in the elaichi, gulab jal, kesar and baras.



Dahi Bhaat

Different from the curd rice of South India, the zing of adrak and kali mirch are uplifting.

Ingredients

- 1 katori rice
- 250 gms full cream dahi
- 1 tsp jeera
- 1 tsp sendha namak
- ½ tsp sabut kali mirch
- 1 tbsp finely julienned adrak
- Finely chopped hara dhania
- 2 tsp boora

Method

Boil the rice in a generous quantity of water and drain.
Whisk the dahi and add sendha namak and boora.
Dry roast the jeera and kali mirch and grind finely.
Mix dahi and spices into the rice.
Garnish with adrak and dhania before serving.



Aamras Bhat

A summer special using local mangoes to add piquancy and sweetness to rice.



Ingredients

- 1 katori rice
- 2 ripe mangoes of your choice
- Mishri to taste
- 5-6 strands kesar soaked in a tsp of warm milk
- 2 pods crushed choti elaichi
- Pinch of baras

Method

Boil the rice till soft and leave to drain and cool.
Peel the mangoes and extract the pulp.
Pass through a mesh to get a silky pulp.
Mix in mishri, elaichi, baras and kesar.
Pour fragrant mango pulp into the rice and mix well.
Serve at room temperature.

Pulao

Ingredients

2 katoris long grain basmati rice
2 tbsp kishmish
2 tbsp soaked, peeled and sliced badams
2 tbsp kaju, fried in ghee
1 tsp lavang
2 medium sized sticks dalcini
1 heaped tsp zeera
A small piece of javitri
½ katori ghee
2 tsp sendha namak

Method

Wash and soak the rice for 15 minutes.
Place to boil in about 6-7 katoris of water with the dry fruits and spices except for jeera and ghee. When the rice softens, drain and leave to dry out for a few minutes.
Heat ghee and add jeera.
When it turns golden, pour over the rice and mix well.
Serve hot.

Kanika

This was an unexpected treat. We loved the chewy texture of the dal and the spiciness of dalcini.

Ingredients

1 katori rice
1 tbsp moong dhuli daal
2 katoris water
¾ katori sugar
¼ tsp badielaichi powder
¼ tsp lavang powder
A good pinch of jaiphal
1 tbsp kishmish
Scant pinch camphor
¼ tsp dalcini powder
¼ katori mixed nuts - almonds, walnuts and pista - roughly chopped
2 tbsp ghee

Method

Pick and wash the rice and dal.
Put the water to boil.
Then tip in the rice mix and when about 70 % done topple in the sugar and spices and continue to cook on moderate heat till 95% ready.
Now pour in the ghee, cover and cook just a few minutes more and take off heat.
Leave to rest about 10 minutes.
fluff up and serve.



D A A L

Chana Kanghau



Ingredients

2 katoris safed chane soaked overnight if possible with
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of baking soda
Small bunch maroi chopped fine
1 tsp jeera powder
1 tsp dhania powder
Sendha namak to taste
2 green chillies slit lengthwise
2 tbsp mustard oil

Method

Heat oil and pop in the maroi, fry well till crispy.
Add the drained chanas and the spice powders and salt.
Fry till the maroi and masalas change colour.
Add about four katoris of water and cook till tender but not mushy.
Dry completely before serving.

Safed Chane



Ingredients

2 katoris safed chane (chick peas),
soaked overnight with a pinch of baking
soda
Namak to taste
1 tsp jeera
1 tsp kali mirch
2 tsp dhania
 $\frac{1}{2}$ nariyal ground to a paste
Generous pinch heeng
2 tbsp ghee
Bunch of finely chopped hara dhania

Method

Boil the chane with salt till tender. Grind the dhania and kali mirch and add to the
chane with nariyal paste.
Simmer till you have a thick consistency.
Remove from heat.
Heat ghee and toss in jeera and heeng.
Pour into the cooked chane and cover tightly allowing the flavours to be absorbed.
Sprinkle hara dhania and serve.



Whole green moong dal can be made in the same way.

Replace ground nariyal with grated nariyal. No need to add baking soda either.

Kale Chane



Ingredients

- 2 katoris kale chane (black gram)
- 2 tbsp sarson ka tel (mustard oil)
- 1 tsp dhania powder
- ½ tsp haldi powder
- 1 tsp garam masala powder
- ½ tsp ajwain
- 1 tsp sendha namak

Method

- Soak chane overnight.
- Heat sarson ka tel to smoking point.
- Then cool.
- Re-heat and add all the masalas.
- Tip in the drained chanas and mix.
- Add 4 katoris of water and cook covered on low flame till tender and dry.
- Mix well and serve.



Meethi Daal



Ingredients

- 1 katori arhar daal
- 1 generous tsp adrak paste
- 2 tsp sugar
- ½ tsp haldi powder
- Namak to taste
- 1 tsp jeera
- Generous pinch heeng
- 2 tbsp ghee
- 2 tsp finely chopped hara dhania

Method

- Mix all the ingredients except ghee, heeng and jeera in 4 katoris of water and place on slow fire, ideally coal, till soft.
- Mix well mashing against the sides with a spoon if need be.
- Heat ghee and add jeera and heeng.
- Swirl around till golden and pour over daal.
- Toss in hara dhania and serve hot.

Uti



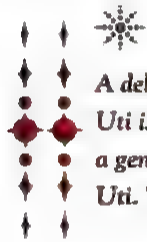
Specific to and an integral part of the Utsav Bhog at the Govinddevji temple, emphasis was laid on the addition of soda in the cooking process. In a significant departure, red and green chillies are used in the Bhog at this temple. In fact, we found some of the dishes really hot!

Ingredients

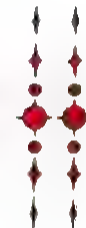
2 katoris uti (dried white peas)
6 katoris water to boil
Small bunch maroi
Namak
1 tsp whole red chillis broken into bits
½ tsp cooking soda
2 tbsp mustard oil
Scant pinch sugar
½ tsp methre
½ tsp jeera

Method

Boil the peas in the water with salt till tender (you could use a pressure cooker).
Simmer till well mixed.
Heat oil and add the maroi, frying till it changes colour.
Put in soda, jeera, methre, chillies and sugar and pour into the uti.
Serve.



A delightful variation in summer is the addition of thin slices of fresh bamboo shoot when the Uti is simmering. Mangal Uti is an offering during the period of the Rath Yatra. To make, add a generous handful of Hawaimana (leaves of the sem (broad bean) creeper) into the simmering Uti. This variation is traditionally eaten with Khichdi.



Mangal

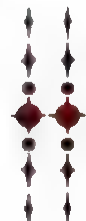


Ingredients

1 katori split yellow peas
4 katoris water
1 tsp haldi
¼ tsp methre
1 tsp jeera
½ dsp dhania powder
¼ tsp lal mirch powder
Sendha namak to taste
2 tsp sarson ka tel
2 tbsp chopped maroi
A pinch heeng

Method

Boil the peas in the water with salt, haldi and lal mirch till tender but not mushy.
Mix well and take off flame.
Heat sarson ka tel and add maroi and fry till it changes colour.
Add methre, jeera, dhania and heeng and pour over the daal.
Cover for a minute.
Serve hot.



We tasted this lovely earthy daal for the first time at the Govind Utsav. Subsequently it has become one of our favourite preparations at home.



Potli

An example of how innovatively the humble moong daal is used to tease and excite the palate. Potli refers to the shape of the bundle of daal while steaming.



Ingredients

250 gms moong dhuli daal
Ghee to fry
2tsp ghee
Good pinch of strong heeng soaked in a tsp of warm water
1tsp zeera
100 gms dahi
1 tsp dhania powder
1 tsp garam masala
Small bunch finely chopped coriander

Method

Soak the daal for about an hour. Drain well and grind to a fine paste. Beat well with a light hand and wrap in a fine muslin cloth like a potli (bundle). Heat water in an open patila (pan) and drop in the potli. Poach for about half an hour. Remove potli from the water, allow to drain and unwrap. Heat ghee in a kadahi. Cut the poached daal into square pieces and drop into the hot ghee. Fry till golden brown and drain to remove excess oil. Whisk the dahi till smooth and add salt and garam masala. Heat ghee in a kadahi and add jeera. When they splutter, add heeng water, dhania powder and fried pieces of daal. Toss around for a bit and then pour in the spiced dahi. Cook uncovered on low flame till you have a thick masala left. Sprinkle over the chopped coriander and serve.

Urad ki Daal

In the Braj region urad ki daal is used only in winter.

Ingredients

1 katori urad dhuli daal
4 katoris water
1 tsp namak
¼ tsp haldi powder
Juice of 1 lime
2 tbsp ghee
2 lavang
1 tsp jeera
Good pinch heeng
1 tbsp adrak juliennes
2 tbsp chopped hara dhania
1 tsp garam masala powder

Method

Pick and wash the daal.
Mix the daal, water, salt and haldi and put to boil on moderate flame in a covered patila.
Cook till tender and well mixed.
Remove from heat and add lime juice.
Heat ghee and pop in the lavang, jeera, heeng.
As they crackle, add the adrak and sauté a few minutes more and pour into the daal.
Garnish with hara dhania and garam masala before serving.



Urad ki Daal (Govindevji style)

At the Govindevji temple in Imphal the utsav leaf is considered incomplete without this dish. Note that no haldi has been added so the daal has a lovely fresh white colour. The creamy white daal cooked to soft perfection stands out in sharp contrast to the other colourful offerings on the fresh green banana leaf.

Ingredients

1 katori urad dhuli daal
4 katoris water
Namak to taste
¼ tsp red chilli powder
2 tbsp mustard oil
1 tsp sabut dhania
1 tsp jeera
¼ tsp methre
Pinch sugar

Method

Pick and wash the daal well.
Put daal to boil with salt and red chilli powder in 4 katoris of water.
Boil till very soft and well mixed.
Heat oil to smoking and lower heat.
Toss in the remaining seeds and as they crackle pour into the simmering daal and cover.
Turn off gas.
Just before serving mix in a pinch of sugar.



Holi at Govindevji

Maroi

The flavour and aroma of this light but hearty stew like dish is a delight for the senses. Maroi is the chive like green leaf herb. Both the leaf and the roots are used in Manipuri temple cuisine.

Ingredients

A bunch of maroi
1 tsp dhania powder
1 tsp jeera
½ tsp lal mirch powder
Namak to taste
2 aloos (potatoes), scrubbed and chopped with the skin
1 katori boiled rajma beans
A handful of groundnuts fried
2 tbsp badis (dry moong daal dumplings)
1 tsp besan
2 tbsp sarson ka tel

Method

Chop the maroi into small pieces.
Heat the oil and add badis.
Fry till they turn brown and remove.
Now add jeera and maroi and fry leaves.
This is a longish process as it takes a long time for the leaves to change colour.
Once the mixture has taken on a brownish tinge, add the potatoes, groundnuts, rajma, dhania, namak and chilli and stir fry for a few minutes.
Now pour in enough water for a robust gravy and continue to simmer, covered till all the flavours develop.
Mix the besan in a little water and add to the gravy to thicken it slightly.
Bring to a boil and serve.



Pakori Rasa

This dish has never failed to attract compliments. Light as air with an hour glass shape these pakoris in the lightly spiced rasa are delightfully light and subtly flavourful. The shape owes itself to a special frying utensil (tai) and a specific cooking technique.



Ingredients

1 katori besan
Scant pinch baking soda
1 tsp jeera powder
1 tsp dhania powder
½ tsp red chilli powder
Mustard oil to fry
Mangal gravy (see pg. 92)
Salt to taste

Method

Sift the besan with the dry masalas and baking soda and make a batter of dropping consistency.

Pour mustard oil upto ½ inch depth and heat to smoking point in a tai (flat frying pan).

Cool a little and then drop in small roundels of the batter into the hot oil in concentric circles so that you have a panful of bubbling pakoris.

Now sprinkle some water all over the top. The oil will hiss and splutter but you will get the desired shape, thanks to the magic of the sprinkled water!

Turn over the pakoris that should now have developed an hourglass figure and cook till golden in colour. Remove from oil and leave to drain.

Drop into the desired quantity of mangal gravy and bring to a quick boil.

Serve at once poured over steaming rice.

Arhar ki Daal



Ingredients

1 katori arhar daal cleaned, picked and washed
4½ katoris water
½ tsp freshly ground haldi powder
1 tsp sendha namak
½ inch piece adrak finely chopped
Walnut sized ball kokum
Walnut sized ball gur (winter) or 1 tsp mishri (summer)
½ tsp methi dana
½ tsp whole jeera
¼ tsp kali mirch powder
1 tbsp pure cow ghee
A good pinch strong heeng dissolved in 1 tsp of water
1 inch piece fresh adrak in juliennes
2 tsp finely chopped hara dhania

Method

Boil the water with the haldi, namak and ½ inch piece of adrak finely chopped.

Add the daal and cover. Simmer on medium heat.

Soak the gur /sugar and kokum in enough water to cover.

Check consistency of the daal which should be tender but grains must be visible. Simmer for about 3-5 minutes stirring occasionally and mashing against the sides of the pan.

Heat the ghee in a small pan.

Add the remaining adrak cut into fine juliennes, jeera, methi seeds and kali mirch powder.

Pour over the daal and cover for a minute.

Add the heeng water.

Turn off gas and serve immediately garnished with the chopped dhania.

Krishna-worthy Kadhi



All over the Northern part of India, the afternoon offering is incomplete without Kadhi. Recipes vary according to region and season but the basic ingredients remain the same. This is one of the dishes that is offered 12 months of the year with very interesting variations.

In Nathdwara, a ritual called 'mausami' is followed. The seasonal fruit and vegetable is added once to the kadhi during the season. In December, apples and ber are added with a pinch of sugar once, leelva (fresh green chana) ki pakori is added once and mango slices are added once during the summer, grapes when in season and so on.



Ingredients

500 gms of matha (chaach)
500 gms of slightly sour thick dahi
100 gms of besan
200 gms of besan
½ tsp of namak
½ katori sarson ka tel
1 good tsp paanch phoren (substitute kalonji (onion seeds) with ajwain)
Handful curry patta
½ tsp freshly ground haldi powder
1 tsp sendha namak
1 scant tsp garam masala powder
1 scant tsp freshly ground dhania powder
A generous pinch of heeng dissolved in water
Handful finely chopped hara dhania
2 generous tbsp cow ghee
½ tsp red chilli powder (optional)

Method

Sieve the matha and curd through a fine muslin cloth. Add 100 gms besan and beat very well taking care that no lumps are formed. If lumps form, sieve again. Keep aside.

Make a batter with the remaining 200 gms besan, a pinch of baking soda and enough water to get a dropping consistency. Now beat this batter lightly but vigorously for at least 5 minutes. It will be visibly fluffy.

Heat about half a cup of mustard oil to smoking point then turn off gas and let the oil cool a bit. Re-kindle and when the oil is hot but not smoking lower the heat to medium and drop marble sized balls of the besan batter. Fry till evenly golden in colour. Drain and keep aside. In the remaining oil add a good teaspoon of paanch phoren and about a loose handful of washed and dried curry leaves. As they splutter noisily pour in the besan-dahi mix. Lower the heat to simmer and add haldi, sendha namak, garam masala and dhania powder. Let the mixture boil for 10 mins and then add the prepared pakoris.

Allow to simmer for at least another 20 minutes. It is believed that the kadhi must boil 1000 times to reach the perfect consistency.

Add heeng to the simmering kadhi. Sprinkle finely chopped hara dhania.

Heat 2 generous tbsps of pure cow's ghee and pour into the kadhi. Cover for a minute and serve very hot with boiled rice.

For Mausami, add the sliced vegetable or fruit as soon as the kadhi begins to boil.

For methi and palak pakoris add a small bunch of finely chopped leaves to the pakori batter and reduce the quantity of water as the saag will leave water.

For Leelva ki pakori grind the hara channas and use instead of besan for the pakoris.

Chane ki Daal ki Subzi

This is one of the daal-vegetable combinations that is an essential part of Raj bhog.

Ingredients

250 gms kashiphal
 ½ katori chana daal (yellow lentil)
 1 tsp sendha namak
 1 tsp haldi
 ½ tsp kali mirch powder
 2 tbsp ghee
 ¼ tsp heeng
 ½ tsp jeera
 ½ tsp rai
 ½ tsp methre
 Handful finely chopped hara dhania

Method

Wash, peel and chop kashiphal into smallish pieces.
 Cover in a small pan and cook on low heat till soft.
 Pick and wash daal.
 Add 2 katoris water, haldi, kali mirch and boil on moderate heat till soft, stirring and mashing against the sides occasionally.
 Mix the dal and kashiphal together in a pan and cook together for a few minutes till amalgamated.
 Take off heat.
 Heat the ghee and toss in the heeng, jeera, methre and rai.
 Let them splutter before you pour over the daal.
 Cover quickly lest the flavor escapes.
 Sprinkle the dhania before you serve.



Kirtaniyas outside a temple

Kabuli Chane ki Subzi

Offerings at Kashi Vishwanath are made with adrak-hari mirch paste, which adds a distinct flavour.

Ingredients

250 gms safed channe soaked overnight and boiled with a pinch of baking soda and salt to taste till soft
 1 tsp jeera
 1 tbsp adrak hari mirch paste
 Generous pinch heeng
 ¼ tsp haldi
 1½ tsp dhania powder
 2 tbsp ghee
 3 tbsp imli pulp (more if you want it sour)
 ½ tsp kali mirch powder
 ½ tsp kala namak
 2 tbsp finely chopped hara dhania
 1 tbsp adrak ke lacche (juliennes)

Method

Moisten the dhania, heeng and haldi.
 Heat ghee and toss in jeera and adrak paste and sauté a few minutes
 Now add the moistened masalas and stir.
 Now add the boiled channas, cover and simmer at least 20 minutes, stirring occasionally and mashing against the sides.
 Now add the imli pulp and simmer adding kali mirch and kala namak.
 When done sprinkle with adrak lacchas and hara dhania.

Kale chane can be made in the same way. No need to add baking soda.

VEGETABLES

Khatte Kachalu

(Large Colocasia)

Ingredients

1 big kachalu
50 gms imli
Sendha namak to taste
1 tsp lal mirch powder
2 tsp garam masala powder
2 tbsp ghee
2 tbsp chopped hara dhania

Method

Boil, peel and cut kachalu into cubes.

Soak and boil imli and extract pulp.

Heat the ghee and add the kachalu cubes and sauté a few minutes till light brown.

Now add all the other ingredients and mix well before serving.

Kashiphal ki Subzi

Ingredients

250 gms kashiphal
1 tbsp ghee
½ tsp jeera
½ tsp rai
¼ tsp methre
Good pinch heeng
Good pinch kali mirch
¼ tsp haldi
1 tsp sendha namak
Handful chopped hara dhania

Method

Wash, peel and chop the kashiphal.

Sprinkle salt, haldi and kali mirch, cover tightly and place on slow heat.

Cook till soft but not mushy.

Heat ghee and toss in all the spices.

Pour over the cooked kashiphal and cover quickly to trap the flavours.

Sprinkle hara dhania before serving.



Radha Ashtami Arbi



In Vrindavan everyone is greeted with 'Radhe Radhe', to celebrate Krishna's favourite consort. It is believed that if one follows her sincere and focused devotion one can achieve oneness with the lord. While Janamashtami celebrates Krishna, Radha Ashtami, more important in Vrindavan and Radha Kund, celebrates Radha Rani, who is the source of spiritual inspiration for Krishna devotees.

Arbi is her favourite vegetable. We tried very hard to get the exact recipe for this delicious dish prepared as Prasul every Radha ashtami but were told by the Pujari Baba at Tatiya Sthan that the recipe is 'gupt' (a secret), so this is recreated from taste. It is very similar to the original but is not a replica perhaps also because the real thing is cooked in an earthen pot whose flavour is incomparable.

The cycle rickshaws in Vrindavan are not fitted with horns. When approaching an obstacle the rickshaw wallah will shout Radhe-Radhe and if you pay no heed he will menacingly intone 'raadhee'!



Ingredients

½ kg arbi
250 gms dahi made with cow milk
Ghee to deep fry
2 tsp dhania powder
1 tsp sendha namak or to taste
½ tsp kali mirch powder
3 badi elaichi
¼ tsp lavang powder

Method

Choose arbi with care. Pieces should be smallish and even sized.

The use of a knife to cut them is to be avoided. Rub the dry arbi with a dry rough cloth till the dark outer skin comes off (traditionally a 'bori' - gunny bag cloth - is used).

Wash very well and wipe dry.

Heat ghee to very hot and then lower the flame and tip in the dried arbi.

The temperature of the ghee should be such that the arbi 'boils' slowly in it and turns an almond brown. This would take a while.

Remove arbi from the ghee and leave to drain.

Drain off most of the ghee leaving about 2 tsp.

Whisk the dahi till smooth and then sieve. Mix in dhania powder, sendha namak, and coarsely pounded kali mirch.

Heat the ghee and add badi elaichi and clove powder. Pour in the spiced dahi and when hot but not boiling topple in the fried arbi.

Lower the flame and cover very tightly. Allow to simmer on very low flame till all the liquid dries up.

If possible leave to cool in a mitti ka tasla (earthen dish).

Can be eaten warm or at room temperature.



Katahal ki Subzi

Offerings at Kashi Vishvanath use a adrak-hari mirch paste as a masala base.

Ingredients

½ kg katahal cut into small pieces
100 gms sarson ka tel
1 hari mirch deseeded
1 tsp jeera
¼ tsp methre
½ tsp saunf
2 tej patta
1 tsp adrak paste
¼ tsp haldi
½ katori dahi, beaten
Namak to taste
Small bunch hara dhanias finely chopped

Method

Heat the oil and saute the katahal till brown.
Remove and leave to drain.
In the oil pop in the jeera, methre, saunf, tej patta and mix.
Now add adrak paste, hari mirch, namak and browned katahal and mix well.
Add haldi and about a katori of water, cover tightly and cook on low flame till very tender.
When done stir in beaten dahi and mix well.
Sprinkle hara dhanias before serving.

In Jagannath Temple, Mayapur, the Lord is said to love Katahal (jackfruit) ki subji. The temple is situated in the midst of lush greenery and vegetable fields, many growing katahal. One day a farmer comes to the temple and complains that someone from the mandir comes to his field at night and steals his ready katahals. The pujaris are astounded and deny the allegation saying why on earth would anyone from the mandir steal katahals? The farmer was not convinced, so he set up wire meshes around his field. The next morning he counted his katahals and sure enough found a few missing. On examining the wire mesh boundary he discovered a piece of blue satin cloth caught on it. He took the cloth to the mandir where the pujaris were arguing over who was responsible for Balram's new blue satin dhoti tearing.

Puzhukku

Katahal or jackfruit is widely used in the Guruvayoor temple and every part of this plant is used in the temple in a wonderful demonstration of its eco-friendly concerns. Devotees are served prasada on plates made of arecanut (supari) leaves, spoons fashioned out of jackfruit leaves held together with a coconut stick made at the temple by sevaks.

Ingredients

500 gms ripe kathal
1 katori kala channa (whole horsegram), soaked overnight
1 tsp sendha namak
1 tsp haldi powder
½ fresh nariyal grated
2-3 sprigs curry pata
3-4 katoris water
½ katori finely chopped hara dhanias

Method

Mix all the ingredients except hara dhanias together, ideally in a copper or bronze handi with a tightly sealed lid and place on a low flame for 2 hours. At the temple the huge bronze cauldron bubbles over a raging fire of coconut husk. Uncover and give a good mix and then add hara dhanias. The slow cooking results in a creamy flavourful texture that is delicious.



Dusrangi Subzi

Choose any 10 seasonal vegetables. This recipe uses winter vegetables.

Ingredients

100 gm kashiphal	4-5 sem (braod beans)
½ katori shelled matar	Small bunch palak
2 parwals	100 gms paneer
1 mooli	2 tsp ghee
1 baingan	¼ tsp heeng
1 small ghiya	1 tsp jeera
100 gms petha	½ tsp rai
100 gms katahal	¼ tsp methre
	½tsp kali mirch powder

Method

Wash, peel and chop vegetables into smallish pieces.
Cover in a small pan and cook on low heat till soft.
Add 2 katoris water, haldi, kali mirch and boil on moderate heat.
Take off heat when tender.
Heat the ghee and toss in the heeng, jeera, methre and rai.
Let them splutter before you pour over the vegetables.
Cover quickly lest the flavor escapes.
Sprinkle the dhania before you serve.



Avial

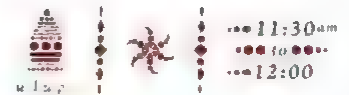
Mixed seasonal vegetables in an aromatic coconut - curd gravy.

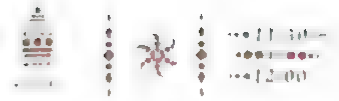
Ingredients

250 gms danthal (drumstick)
250 gms chichinda (snake guard)
500 gms zimikand (yam)
250 gms kacha kela (raw banana)
50 gms long beans
1 small karela (bitter gourd)
3 sprigs curry patta
2 pcs nariyal
2 tsp jeera
1 tsp haldi powder
100 gms coconut oil
¼ katori dahi
Namak to taste

Method

Cut the cleaned vegetables in long pieces.
Add namak, haldi powder, ½ the coconut oil into the vegetables and mix it well.
Cook it on a low flame till soft but not mushy.
Grind the coconut and cumin seed.
Mix it with the cooked vegetables.
Add dahi, remaining coconut oil and curry patta.
Mix well.





Thoran

Use ½ kg. of any seasonal vegetable of your choice - beans, yam, raw banana, any gourd are good.

Ingredients

2 pcs nariyal
2 tsp jeera
1 tsp haldi powder
100 gms coconut oil
1 tsp rai
2 sprigs curry patta
Namak to taste

Method

Cut the vegetables in small pieces.
Heat the coconut oil in a pan.
Add rai and curry patta and sauté.
Put the vegetables in and add namak and haldi powder.
Mix it well and cover tightly.
Cook on low flame.
Grind the coconut and jeera coarsely.
Add to the cooked vegetables and simmer till dry.



Paneer Curry

Soaking the fried paneer in milk and using the residue liquid for the curry adds an unusual richness to this recipe.

Ingredients

Paneer made from 1 litre full fat milk	1 tsp besan
Residue whey	¼ tsp haldi
Handful fried groundnuts	Namak to taste
Small stick dalchini	½ katori milk
1 katori matar (optional)	Small bunch maroi leaves chopped
1 tsp jeera	very fine
Good pinch heeng	4-5 tbsp sarson ka tel
¼ tsp methre	

Method

To make paneer boil the milk and add a souring agent like dahi, lime juice or vinegar to split it. Pour through a sieve and leave the milk solids to set by placing in a cloth and covering with a weight. Cut the paneer into cubes, heat the oil and fry till golden brown. Drain and soak in the milk. In the remaining oil pop in the jeera, methre, heeng, dalchini and maroi and fry till they change colour. Add haldi, salt and green peas, if using, and fry about 5-7 minutes more. Now pour in the milk and whey and cook covered on a low flame till the peas are soft. Topple in the fried paneer and groundnuts and simmer gently for 5 minutes. Serve hot.



Methi, Palak, Bathua, Chane ka Saag

Ingredients

1 small bunch each methi, palak, bathua and chane ka saag	1 tsp sabut dhania
Or	1 tsp amchur
1 big bunch any 2 or any one as per your desire	¼ tsp haldi powder
1 katori besan	Salt to taste
2 tbsp ghee	1 tsp garam masala powder
1 tsp kali mirch	Good pinch heeng
	2 tbsp chopped dhania
	Pinch boora
	Ghee for tadka

Method

Clean and wash the saag well. Leave to drain. Dry roast the kali mirch and dhania and grind. Heat 1 tbsp ghee and bhoono (roast) the besan till pink and dry. Keep aside. Steam the saag with a little salt to taste. Heat the remaining ghee and put in the saag and the bhoonoed besan. Add all the remaining masalas and mix well. Sprinkle a pinch of boora and remove from heat. Sprinkle hara dhania and serve hot.

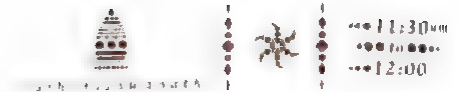
Aloo Dum

Ingredients

½ kg baby potatoes
Ghee to fry
1 tbsp khus khus
2 tbsp khoya
2 tbsp dahi
1 tbsp jeera
Good pinch heeng
1 tsp haldi
2 tsp dhania
1 tsp garam masala
Salt to taste

Method

Wash and scrub potatoes well.
Heat ghee and fry potatoes on medium heat till golden brown.
Drain well.
Soak and grind khus khus and mix with the dahi and khoya.
Heat a tbsp of the remaining ghee and pop in the heeng and jeera.
Topples in the fried potatoes and namak.
Moisten the haldi, dhania and garam masala and add.
Mix very well till the potatoes are coated with the masalas.
Now pour in the dahi mix, lower flame and simmer covered till potatoes are very tender.
Garnish with finely chopped dhania leaves.



Aloo Matar ki Subzi

Ingredients

3 medium sized aloo (potatoes)
1 katori shelled matar (green peas)
Namak to taste
Pinch sugar
¼ tsp haldi
1 tsp freshly ground dhania powder
1 tsp garam masala powder
Juice of 1 nimbu (lemon)
2 tbsp ghee
1 tsp whole jeera
¼ tsp rai
Good pinch heeng
Few seeds methre
½ tsp lal mirch powder
¼ tsp kali mirch powder
2 tbsp chopped hara dhania

Method

Wash and cut aloo into cubes.
Steam the matar and aloo together till tender.
Add namak, haldi, sugar and continue steaming.
Mix the dry masalas in a tbsp of water and nimbu juice and pour into the simmering vegetables.
Continue to simmer covered till very tender.
Heat ghee in a small katori and toss in the whole spices.
When they crackle, pour over the vegetables and leave katori in the pan and cover for at least 5 minutes.
Now add hara dhania and serve.

Other delicious combinations:

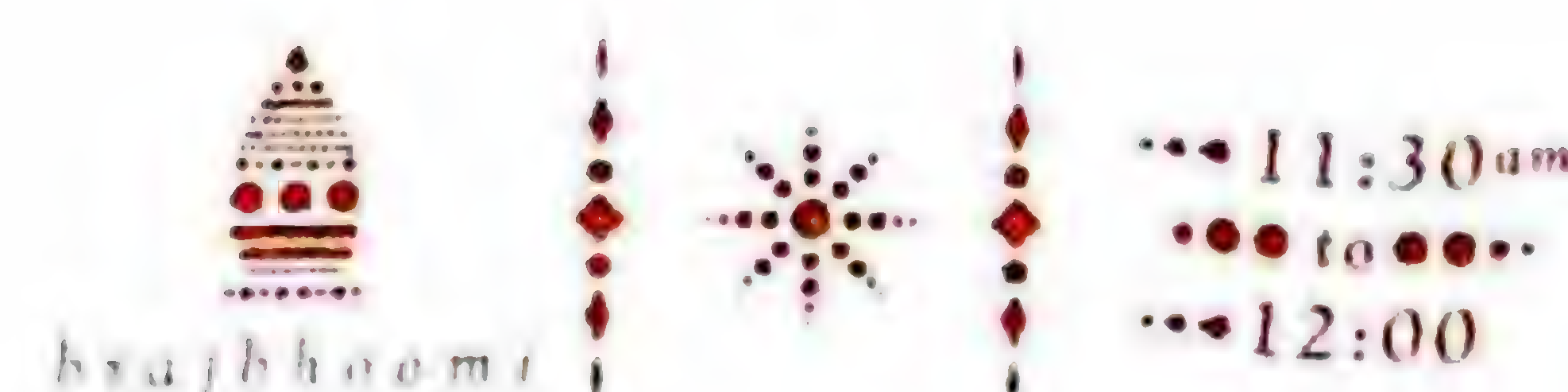
Aloo-matar-kashiphal

Aloo-palak-methi

Palak-methi-kashiphal



Chaachwale Aloo



Ingredients

½ kg baby potatoes boiled and peeled
 250 ml chaach
 1 tsp sendha namak
 Generous pinch strong heeng soaked in a tbsp of warm water
 1 tsp jeera
 ¼ tsp haldi
 2 tsp aromatic ghee
 Small bunch finely chopped hara dhania

Method

Heat ghee in a heavy bottomed kadahi.
 Add jeera and as it splutters add the heeng water, haldi and sendha namak.
 Topples in the potatoes and toss them in the masala.
 Pour in the chaach and bring to a gentle boil.
 Reduce gas to very low, cover the kadahi and simmer for at least half an hour stirring occasionally.
 The dish is ready when the potatoes are very tender and there is a soft coating of chaach over them.
 Sprinkle finely cut hara dhania before you serve.

Khaminasinbathomba



On the cold winter afternoon this spicy and flavourful soupy offering had us smacking our lips. Govindevi surely enjoys his food.



Ingredients

2 tomatoes
 1 aloo scrubbed well
 A handful of green peas
 1 katori boiled rajma
 Bunch maroi
 1 tsp kaba (khus khus)
 1 tsp black jeera (shajira)
 ¼ tsp methre
 1tsp dhania powder
 ¼ tsp ajwain
 Namak to taste
 2 inch piece loklei (galangal)
 1 tsp red chilli powder
 Handful of badis
 4 tbsp mustard oil

Method

Chop the maroi very fine.
 Slice loklei finely.
 Heat oil and fry the badis.
 Drain and in the same oil add the chopped maroi and fry till it changes colour.
 Add the kaba and continue frying.
 Boil the sliced loklei, drain the water and boil again. Repeat this process at least 3 times to reduce the pungency of the root.
 Now add to the maroi along with diced potatoes, green peas and rajma.
 After a few minutes add all the spices and keep frying till dry.
 Now add about 3 katoris of leftover rice water /plain water and simmer till the broth thickens a bit.
 Add sliced tomato and take off the fire.
 Serve hot.

Pottal Rasa



~ 11.30 ~
~ 12.00 ~



Ingredients

½ kg pottal (parwal)
Ghee to fry
2 sticks dalchini
1 tsp jeera
1 tsp dhania seeds
¼ tsp kali mirch
2 tbsp grated fresh nariyal
Namak to taste
¼ tsp haldi powder

Method

Wash and dry the pottal and cut into roundels.
Heat ghee and fry till golden brown.
Drain well.
Dry roast the jeera, dalchini, kali mirch, dhania and grind along with the nariyal to a smooth paste.
Heat a tbsp of the remaining ghee and add the ground masala, namak and enough water for a gravy consistency.
Bring to a boil and then lower the flame and add fried pottal.
Cook till the pottal is tender but still has lachak (bite).



Besuro



11:30 am
12:00

A classic and popular vegetable combo all over Orissa, this is a meal in itself. In the temple, the earthen pot used for cooking, the specific hierarchy followed in layering the vegetables and of course the unique chulha used for cooking gives it that unparalleled character. You may have eaten many besuros but this one is special.

Ingredients

200 gms kashiphal

2 shakarkandi (sweet potato)

2 green kela

3 long baingans

100 gms mitti aloo

Generous pinch heeng

1 tsp jeera

Scant pinch sugar

1 tsp sarson

1 tsp saunf (panmadhuri)

2" piece adrak

3 heaped tbsp nariyal grated

½ tsp haldi

Salt to taste

2 tbsp ghee

Small bunch finely chopped hara dhania with stems

Method

Wash and dry vegetables and chop as follows:

Kashiphal - cubes

Shakarkandi - fine dice

Hara kela - fine dice

Baingan - cubes

Mitti aloo - cubes

Grind the adrak and nariyal together to a fine paste.

Grind jeera, sarson and saunf together and mix with haldi and heeng.

In a deep vessel (traditionally the long earthen handi would be used) place a layer of kashiphal, then baingan, then mitti aloo then shakarkandi, then kela.

Now spread half the adrak-nariyal paste followed by the masalas and salt and a little chopped dhania.

Now put the remaining vegetables in the following order— baingan, kela, mitti aloo shakarkandi and kashiphal.

Put in the remaining ground paste and masala and salt and dhania.

Essentially you have a layer of kashiphal at the top and bottom of the vessel.

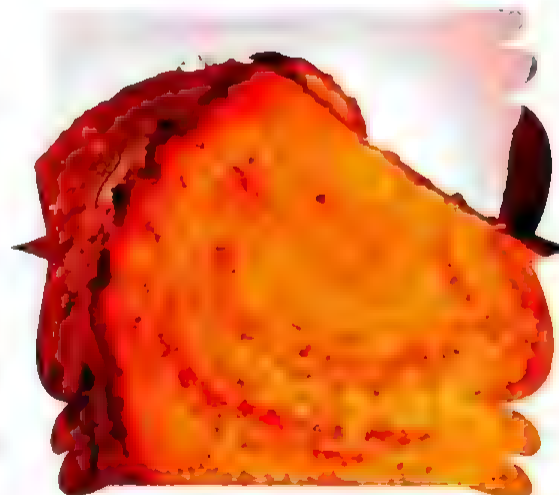
Pour in ¼ cup of water, cover tightly and set on a moderately high flame to cook till the vegetables are beginning to soften.

Uncover the vessel and with a spatula reach deep into the bottom and turn over the vegetables - this is a bit tricky so do it with care.

Cover and return to heat and continue to cook till very tender.

Heat ghee to very hot and pour over the cooked vegetables.

Garnish with the remaining dhania.



Like Besuro, Mohuro is a mixture of different spices. Basic mohuro masala includes jeera, haldi, kali mirch, and dhania. To make, simply replace the sarson and saunf with kali mirch and dhania powder and add ½ grated nariyal.

Dalma

All in one dish with daal, vegetables and spices.

Ingredients

1 katori arhar daal	1 tbsp curry patta
1 tsp haldi powder	Scant pinch sugar
Namak to taste	100 gms kashiphal
2" piece adrak ground to a paste	1 long baingan
Generous pinch of heeng	1 mooli
2 tbsp ghee	100 gms petha
1 tsp sarsoon	2 pottails
1 tsp jeera	½ nariyal ground to a fine paste
	Small bunch finely chopped hara dhania

Method

Pick and wash daal and soak for 10 minutes.

Wash and chop the vegetables into bite sized pieces.

Combine the daal, vegetables, 4 katoris water, haldi, namak, sugar, adrak and nariyal together and place on high flame till it boils.

Now reduce heat to low, cover and allow to cook till all the ingredients are very tender and well mixed.

Remove from heat.

Heat ghee and toss in jeera, sarson, curry patta and heeng in that order.

Pour while spluttering into the dalma and cover for a minute to catch the aromas.

Scatter the chopped dhania before serving.

Pumpkin Curry

Ingredients

250 gms red pumpkin
2 tbsp mustard oil
1 tsp jeera
¼ tsp methre
1 tsp sabut dhania
¼ tsp heeng
¼ tsp haldi powder
Namak to taste

Method

Heat 1 tbsp of oil and add washed, peeled and chopped pumpkin.

Fry well and add ½ katori water and salt.

Cover and simmer till very soft. Mash after drying it out a little.

It should have the consistency of a thick gravy.

Heat the remaining oil and add the spices.

Fry till they splutter and then pour over the pumpkin gravy.



Jahni Rai

Mahasupakar Madhuji tried very hard to describe the vegetable 'jahni' but eventually had to show us a picture of torai. His insistence that this is a dish for very special occasions or festivals had us thinking of exotic vegetables rather than the humble torai!

Ingredients

½ kg torai
2 tsp rai paste
½ tsp haldi powder
A pinch of hing
1 tsp sendha namak
2 tsp ghee

Method

Wash, peel and cut torai into roundels.
Place to boil on a medium flame with a katori of water, haldi, namak and rai paste.
Remove from the flame when soft and heat the ghee separately.
Add heeng to the ghee and pour into the torai and cover for a minute.

Erriseri

Simple, flavourful and healthy vegetable stew

Ingredients

2 raw bananas
100 gms yam
100 gms red kashiphal
100 gms petha (ashgourd)
2 green/purple baingans
2 katoris coconut milk
1 tsp sarson seeds
3 sprigs curry patta
¼ tsp haldi
Salt to taste
1 tbsp coconut oil
Grind together:
½ nariyal scraped
1 hari mirch

Method

Cut vegetables into small pieces and set to boil with salt and haldi.
Heat oil, toss in sarson, curry patta and mix around till they splutter.
Now add ground paste and fry a bit.
Pour in the boiled vegetables, add coconut milk, cover and simmer till well mixed.
Serve hot.

Kalan

Very light, simple flavours.

Ingredients

100 gms yam, cleaned, washed and cut into medium sized pieces
2 raw bananas
1 tsp kali mirch freshly crushed
¼ tsp haldi
Namak to taste
1 katori beaten dahi

Method

Peel, wash and cut the bananas into similar sized pieces as the yam and set to boil with a little water, namak, haldi and half the kali mirch.
When the vegetables are soft add the beaten dahi and simmer till a gravy remains. Take care not to let it boil or it will curdle.
Sprinkle remaining kali mirch to serve.

Matti Gulla



Well known Udupi saint, Swami Vaadiraja used to offer a delicacy prasad named Hayagreeva Maddi to Lord Haryagreeva, a deity with the head of a white horse, everyday. Hayagreeva Maddi is a sweet delicacy made of Bengal gram, jaggery, ghee and grated coconut. The Maddi would be placed on his head and the horse-shaped lord would partake some portion of it and leave the rest for Vaadiraja.

Some devotees who did not get to eat the Maddi were jealous and one day mixed poison into the preparation. As usual, Vaadiraja offered it to Lord Hayagreeva and instantly he turned blue. Lord Hayagreeva did not leave any morsel for Vaadiraja and cleaned the bowl. The Udupi Krishna idol also turned blue. The same night Vaadiraja had a dream that seeds of a brinjal from a place named Mattu should be sown. The harvested brinjal would serve as a remedy for extracting the poison off the lord. Promptly, the farmers sowed the seeds, harvested the crop and offered the Gulla to Lord Krishna and the poison was removed. This is the famous folklore associated with the origin of Mattu Gulla. Even today, when the Gulla is soaked in water, it turns purple indicating the extraction of the poison.

|| This green brinjal is made in several ways but the most lip-smacking is the stuffed version. ||

Stuffed Matti Gulla

Ingredients

250 gms matti gulla (small round green brinjals)
½ fresh coconut grated
2 hari mirch
Small bunch hara dhania
2 tsp raw peanuts
1 tsp til seeds
½ tsp haldi
½ tsp jeera
A pinch of heeng
1 tsp dhania powder
Sendha namak to taste
2 tsp gur (jaggery)
1 tsp imli (tamarind)
3 tbsp coconut oil

Method

Soak the imli and gur, heat and extract pulp.
Dry roast the peanuts and til seeds till brown.
Grind along with coconut, chillies, hara dhania.
Mix in the dry masalas except heeng and jeera.
Wash the matti gullas, wipe dry and make two incisions on the top portion of each, but only ¾ way down.
Stuffed the ground masala into the incisions.
Heat oil and pop in heeng and jeera.



Slide in the stuffed matti gullas and stir to coat with the oil. Add any remaining masalas as well.

Add a few tbsp of water, lower heat and cover tightly.

Check frequently to ensure that the masalas don't burn.

When the vegetable begins to soften pour in the gur-imli pulp and cook till tender.

Serve hot.

ROTIS / CEREALS

Bejarki Roti

Multigrain bread at its mouth-watering best! It's little wonder that Lord Krishna called it his favourite dish.



... 11:30am
... 1:00pm
... 12:00



Ingredients

2 katoris atta made of equal quantities
of chana, whole wheat, jowar
(sorghum), bajra (pearl millets) and
jaun (barley)
3 tsp ghee
1tsp sendha namak
Water as needed
Ghee to smear

Method

Heat the ghee and pour into the atta.
Mix delicately into the atta.
Add salt and small quantities of water, waiting till it is absorbed before adding more.
Knead well till you have a firm but smooth dough.
Leave to rest covered with a moist cloth for half an hour.
Heat a heavy bottomed tava.
Break off a ball of the dough and roll with a delicate hand to about ¼ inch thickness.
Place on the tava and cook till light brown flecks appear on both sides.
Then roast on the open flame till crispy.
Smear with a generous quantity of ghee and serve immediately.

Tikar

These rotis rely on the kneading of a practised hand and the flavor of course, comes from roasting on an open wood fire. Deities in small temples all over the Braj countryside are offered tikar as a part of Rajbhog.

Ingredients

2 katoris atta
2 tbsso ghee
1 tsp sendha namak
Water as required

Method

The trick lies in the kneading so begin by adding small quantities of water and wait for it to get absorbed before adding more into the atta, ghee and namak mixture.

The dough must be soft and very smooth.

Heat a tava on a wood fire, if possible, or on the regular gas, if not.

Break off a generous roundel and roll out to a thick roti.

Place on the hot tava and turn when the underside begins to change colour.

When both sides are cooked place the tikar on the open flame and brown nicely.

You could smear more ghee if you like but it will be soft enough as it is as well.



Roti

At Nathdwara we collected the thaal for Rajbhog and each dish had us shaking our heads in delightful disbelief but the rotis were irresistibly soft and of an unbelievable texture. We couldn't wait to uncover the recipe and Mukesh rasola laughed when the first recipe we asked him for was the seemingly simple roti. Simple it is but with that special twist that makes all the difference!

Ingredients

2 katoris atta
Water to bind - about ½ - ¾ katori
½ katori chawal ka atta (rice flour)
About a katon of ghee, melted and poured into a flat thali

Method

Knead the atta and water to form a soft and pliable dough, adding water gradually and slowly and kneading with a delicate but firm touch. The final dough must have a bounce.

Leave to rest at least 15 minutes, covered.

Put a tava to heat on a medium flame.

Break off a small roundel of dough and roll out into a thin roti.

Patto (dip) the roti in the rice flour if it sticks.

Place on the hot tava and cook on both sides till it begins to puff up.

Dip both sides quickly into the melted ghee, fold and keep warm on a separate thali.

Repeat till all the dough is used up and serve the soft, melt in the mouth rotis warm.



Chane aur Jaun ki Roti



This one is a health freak's delight except for the generous quantity of ghee used. Omitting the ghee would be a grave mistake so indulge wholeheartedly, occasionally. Both grains are heart friendly anyway! Chane ka atta absorbs ghee like a sponge so ghee is used twice over for these rotis.

Ingredients

1 katori chane ka atta (desi chanas (chick peas)) are the best
1 katori Jaun (barley)
About $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ katori water with 2 tbsp ghee
Sendha namak to taste
 $\frac{1}{4}$ katori warm water
2 tbsp ghee

Method

Mix the two attas and salt and knead a soft dough with the first ghee - water mixture.
Heat a tava and make rotis of medium thickness.
Place on the tava and when both sides are cooked, brown gently on an open flame.
Smear the 2nd ghee-water mixture on the hot rotis to prevent them from drying.
Stack up and keep covered till ready to serve.
In winter, makkai (corn) is also added for an even more delicious and nutritious roti.

Baingan ke Gunje



These are a little difficult to make as the mashed brinjals are very slippery but a little care and effort makes it worthwhile.

Ingredients

$\frac{1}{2}$ kg plump deep purple baingans
 $\frac{1}{2}$ kg malda
2 tsp namak
Oil to fry
2 tbsp ghee
100 gms grated dry coconut
100 gms finely minced adrak
10 gms amchur powder
A generous pinch of good quality, strong heeng

Method

Roast the baingans on a medium open flame till they are charred.
Remove the skin carefully and mash well.
Mince the adrak finely.
Heat a tsp of oil and add the finely minced ginger, heeng, amchur and salt.
Now add grated coconut.
Add the mashed baingans and sauté on high heat till dry.
Add ghee to malda and knead a puri dough.
Take a walnut- sized ball and make a depression. Fill with a small bit of the brinjal mixture.
Close the ends carefully and roll very, very gently taking care not to split the sides.
This is quite tricky so be patient and persistent.
Heat the oil to smoking in a kadahi.
Fry the prepared baingan gunjas to a golden brown.
Enjoy hot, straight out of the kadhai with daal or kadahi.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Fried Pakoris

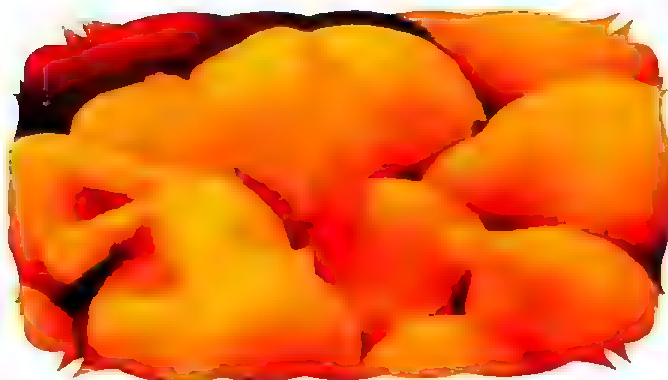
This is the basic batter that can be used to make both pakoris to be eaten crisp or dunked into the rasa and for dipping vegetables of your choice for vegetable pakoras as well.

Ingredients

1 katori besan
1 katori very finely ground dry urad dhuli daal
Small bunch maroi very finely chopped
1 tsp jeera
1 tsp dhanis powder
Pinch soda
Namak to taste
Mustard oil to fry
Few pieces of banana flower

Method

Mix besan and daal and enough water to make a dropping consistency.
Pop in all the other ingredients and mix well.
Heat mustard oil to smoking and cool slightly before dropping in small roundels of the batter.
Fry on medium heat till crisp and golden.
Serve hot.
To make vegetable pakoris omit the banana flower pieces and dip slices of any vegetable of your choice in the batter. You could try baingans, kashiphal, lauki, aloo, whole palak leaves etc.



Ada Pachadi

Ideally accompanies namak khichdi. The crispy, spicy, gingery flavour acts as a perfect foil to the delicate softness of the khichdi.

Ingredients

2 inch piece adrak
Salt to taste
1 tsp imli pulp
Sprinkle of rice flour
Ghee to shallow fry

Method

Thinly slice the adrak and toss in all the other ingredients.
Heat the ghee in a shallow pan or tawa and fry the slices till crispy.

MUTHIA

Muthias are called so as they are shaped according to the 'mutthi' or closed fist.

Doodhi Muthia

Ingredients

2 katoris bottle gourd (doodhi - lauki)
1 katori atta
½ katori besan
¼ katori sooji
2 tbsp adrak hari mirch paste
½ tbsp haldi
1 tsp jeera powder
1 tsp dhania powder
juice of two lemons
2 tbsp sugar
2 to 3 tbsp chopped hara dhania
1 tbsps baking soda
4 tbsps thick dahi
4 tbsps ghee
Sendha namak

For baghaar

2 tbsps rai
1 tbsp til
4 tbsps ghee
2 tbsps chopped hara dhania
2 tbsps grated fresh nariyal

Method

Press all the water out of the grated doodhi and keep it aside.
Combine all the ingredients for muthia and add the dahi to make a soft dough.
Add doodhi water only if necessary.
Oil the palms well and divide mixture into 4 equal parts and roll out each cylindrically about 6" long and 1" in diameter.
Steam the rolls in a colander for 20 minutes.
Check by inserting a needle or a toothpick, if it comes out clean they are done.
Keep aside and let them cool, then slice them.

For baghaar

Heat ghee in a wide kadahi and add the sarson.
After they crackle add the til and then the sliced muthias.
Toss them on medium heat for 2 or 3 mins and then garnish with hara dhania and nariyal.
Muthias can be made with palak, methi or even aloo by simply replacing the ghiya with the desired vegetable.
They can also be fried after steaming.



BHUJINA

Typically a crunchy batter-fried vegetable is served with Rajbhog to provide a variety of textures. Bhujinas are made with any seasonal vegetable/fruit and are a hot favourite.

Methi Bhujina

Ingredients

1 bunch fresh methi
Approx a katori of besan
¼ katori dry ground urad dhuli daal
¼ katori dry ground moong dhuli daal
2 tbsp rice powder
2 tbsp ghee
Salt to taste
Good pinch heeng
Mustard oil to fry

Method

Clean and wash the methi well and cut very fine.
Heat oil to smoking and turn off gas.
Mix all the dry ingredients and then add the chopped methi and mix well.
You should have a toughish dough so add a sprinkle of water to soften a little.
Heat the ghee and pour into the mixture and incorporate.
Heat oil to moderate heat.
Take a walnut sized roundel of the dough and shape according to your fist.
Drop into the hot oil and fry on moderate flame till golden and crunchy on the outside and soft on the inside.
Aloo, palak, ghiya, brinjal bhujinas can be made by replacing the methi with slices of the desired vegetables.





Shugtani (Chutney)



Typically this is a bitter-sweet chutney made from Nungmangkha leaf, but substituted by Neem or Papaya leaves also known for their antiseptic quality, when they are not available. In Ayurveda these bitter leaves are considered a powerful antibiotic and must be served as part of the main meal or at least once a day.

Ingredients

- 1 bunch bitter leaves
- A generous handful of sugar
- Namak to taste
- 3-4 tbsp pumpkin curry
- 1 tbsp sarson ka tel

Method

- Wash and dry the leaves.
- Roughly tear them up.
- Heat the oil and drop in the leaves.
- Fry till they are crispy
- Now add the pumpkin curry, sugar and cover.
- Cook till you have a chutney consistency.



Inchi Puli (Ginger pickle)



At Guruvayoor and Udupi we ate this spicy-sour condiment like a vegetable, so tasty was it.

Ingredients

- 500 gms adrak
- 1 kg imli
- 500 gms gur
- 500 gms hari mirch
- 50 gms curry patta
- Namak to taste
- 50 gms kali mirch powder
- 10 gms heeng powder

Method

- Cut the adrak and hari mirch into pieces.
- Put the imli into one litre of water and keep it for half an hour.
- Squeeze the imli and strain it.
- Add the adrak and hari mirch to this imli water.
- Boil till it is cooked.
- Melt the gur with ½ litre of water and add to adrak mixture.
- Add kali mirch powder, namak and heeng powder and boil till it thickens.
- Leave to cool and allow flavours to develop before using.



Tenti ka Achar



Being Krishna's favourite accompaniment this achar is a must at every meal offered to Him. It is believed to have digestive benefits.

Ingredients

250 gms tenti (dhela)
250 gms mustard oil
3 tbsp rai
2 tbsp sendha namak

Method

Wash the tenti well and dry in the sun for 2 days.
Grind the rai to a fine powder.
In an earthen pot mix the salt, rai and oil.
Drop the tenti into the spiced oil and mix well.
Cover the vessel and leave in the sun for a couple of days.
Serve with hot bejar ki roti.



Krishna sneaks out sometime during the warm afternoon to frolic at the riverside with his playmates. The gopis vie with each other to be in Krishna's good books as they throw a ball at each other. Suddenly Krishna announces a contest to see which of his playmates knows his taste best. The next day they will all go for a picnic and each of the gopas and gopis must bring a dish that they think is Krishna's favorite. There is great excitement and a spirited discussion ensues till Krishna realizes he must return before Yashoda Maiya notices his absence. The next day all the friends gather as planned and each one presents their dish...one more exotic and rich than the other. Krishna tastes everything and then settles down to eat one dish with great relish. Everyone crowds around him to see his favourite dish. It is Bejar ki roti and tenti ka achar. Bejar is a mix of 5 grains-chana, gehun, jaun, millet and bajra. Very simple and nutritious as we know the benefits of multi-grain flour today. Tenti refers to the seed of the tenti fruit. The tenti bush grows wild all over Braj and is a beautiful sight when it flowers. Deep pink flowers dot a spiky, barren thush.

Navratna Chutney

Called so because of the 9 ratnas (gems) that go into this palate tingler.

Ingredients

1 grated raw mango (summer)
1 grated apple (winter)
10 dates de-seeded and sliced
10 badams soaked, peeled and sliced
50 gms golden kishmish
2" piece adrak, peeled and cut into strips
5-6 choti elaichi roughly crushed
6-7 lavang
1 tsp kali mirch, roughly crushed
2-4 1" sticks of dalchini
1½ katoris sugar and water for chashni
Sendha namak to taste



Method

Make a 2-taar chashni with the sugar and water and then add all the sabut masalas and dry fruits.
When it begins to thicken add the dates and cook till they soften slightly.
Now add the grated raw mango or apple and salt and take off the flame.
Cool before serving.

Khajoor ki Chutney

Ingredients

100 gms khajoor (dates)
Namak to taste
Pinch heeng
Pinch kali mirch powder
¼ tsp jeera

Method

De-seed the dates, boil with heeng and grind to a chutney consistency puree.
Add namak and kali mirch to taste.
Dry roast the jeera till chocolate brown, crush and mix into the chutney.
Serve with bhujinas.

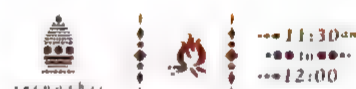
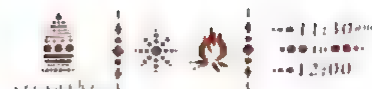
Palak-Dhania ki Chutney

Ingredients

10 leaves palak
A small bunch of hara dhania
Good pinch heeng
1 tsp jeera
Sendha namak to taste
Pinch kala namak

Method

Boil the palak and mix with the dhania and grind.
Add namak, sendha namak and heeng.
Dry roast the jeera till chocolate brown then crush into the chutney.



Khatta

Literally meaning 'sour' this refers to a chutney type offering made from a sour ingredient as one of the 7 tastes to be appealed to.

Ingredients

Any one of the following fruits:

½ Pineapple

Imli (tamarind) – about 100 gms

2 Kamrakh (star fruit)

Sendha namak to balance the sourness

100 gms gur

Method

Cut the fruit into pieces and extract the pulp of the tamarind if using.

Mix all the ingredients together and cook till slightly softened.



Madhur Ruchi

Spicy, tart, sweet, crunchy and soft all at the same time, this fruity relish celebrates and seduces the taste buds and the senses.

Ingredients

1 sweet apple (Kinnauri)

100 gms green angoor (grapes)

100 gms black angoor

1 ripe banana

2 tbsp grated nariyal

1 tbsp gur grated finely

Salt to taste

A walnut sized ball of imli

1 tbsp rice powder

Method

Soak the imli in a little water till soft.

Boil and extract the pulp. Leave to cool.

Wash the fruits and cut into bite sized pieces.

Mix all the ingredients together.

Heat a kadahi and very quickly toss all the ingredients in it till just heated through.

Remove and leave to cool before serving.



PITHA

Jagannath temple offers a mind boggling variety of 'pithas' - a cake or bread type dish made of rice or wheat flour or a combination of rice and daal or only daal. They can be sweet or salty and fried, steamed, stuffed or spread like a pancake. Sweet versions can use sugar or jaggery, even new jaggery as a sweetener.



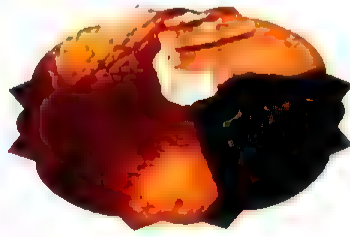
Biri Pitha

Ingredients

2 katoris urad chilka daal soaked for an hour
1 tsp ajwain
1 tsp jeera
Namak to taste
1 banana leaf
Ghee to fry

Method

Rub the daal vigorously to remove the black outer skin.
Wash well, drain and grind to a smooth batter.
Mix in the spices and beat with a light hand till fluffy.
Heat the ghee.
Cut out a portion of the leaf and moisten it. Now spread about 2 heaped tbsp of the batter on the leaf and fold the leaf over so that you have a crescent shape.
Slide into the hot ghee and fry till it rises and changes colour.
Flip over and fry till the other side is also a delicate brown.



For Hansakeli: make small vadas, pile on a thali and dust with boora.

Enduri



This is the Oriya version of the light and fluffy rice cakes of the south, idlis. However, they can be spiced up and don't necessarily need to be in the shape of idlis but can be steamed in a flat thali and cut into pieces as well. Traditionally the batter was spread on a turmeric leaf and steamed.

Ingredients

- 2 katoris idli rice (par boiled)
- 1 katori urad dhuli daal
- 100 gms chenna (soft paneer)
- 2 tbsp fresh coconut, grated or cut into tiny pieces
- 1 tsp jeera slightly browned
- ½ tsp kalimirch coarsely pounded
- Salt to taste
- Haldi leaves as required (use banana leaves if not available)

Method

Soak the rice and daal for an hour and then grind with a little water to a paste of medium coarseness. Leave to ferment. The time taken will depend on the season - longer in winter and shorter in summer.

Once the batter ferments add the chenna and the spices and mix well.

Lightly oil the haldi/banana leaves if using and spread the batter thickly on it. Fold and secure the sides then set to steam over boiling water.

Remove when done and slice thickly to serve.



Kotte Kadubu



We thought these were ordinary idlis till we tasted the faint flavour of the leaf they were steamed in.

Ingredients

- 2 katoris raw rice
- 1 katori urad chilka daal
- Sendha namak to taste

Method

Wash and soak rice and black gram daal separately in water for 2 hours.

Grind black gram daal to a smooth batter with 1½ cups of water. Transfer it to a vessel.

Coarsely grind rice by adding water little by little. Blend this with the black gram daal batter.

Add namak and mix well.

The batter must ferment overnight.

When this batter is poured into cups made of jackfruit leaves and steamed it is called Kotte Kadubu. You could use banana leaves.

Serve kadubu with coconut oil or butter and chutney or buttermilk.

On special occasions and during poojas like Durga Namaskara, the Kadubu is offered to Goddess Durga.

Shingju (Salad)



... 11 30
... 06 00
... 12 00

Sharp, bitter, sweet, sour and salty all at once with a variety of textures this is a treat for the eyes, senses and palate. It epitomizes the creative use of fresh ingredients as per the seasonal availability and is an excellent example of the divine combination of elemental ingredients.



Ingredients

- One small fresh cabbage
- A few strands of komprek (water dropwort)
- 1 bhen (lotus root)
- Small bunch pea leaves
- 2 tbsp chopped banana flower
- Namak to taste
- 1 tsp lal mirch powder
- 1 tsp fried besan
- 1 tsp fried til seeds

Method

- Chop the cabbage very thin.
- Slice the lotus stem very thin and immerse in cold water with the banana flower.
- Roughly tear the leaves and soak in water.
- When ready to serve drain the vegetables well, mix in the spices and fried besan and serve immediately.

PALATE CLEANSERS

The concept of sipping a bland liquid between the wide variety consumed at Raj bhog to cleanse the palate and prepare it to receive the subsequent tastes is the perfect example of the wisdom of our ancestors.

Moong Dal Jhol

Offered as a palate cleanser, this is also a spicy and flavoursome thin soup.

Ingredients

2 cups moong daal water
3-4 moong daal badis
Good pinch heeng
¼ tsp haldi
¼ tsp pepper powder
1 tsp sendha namak
1 tsp ghee

Method

Heat the ghee and sauté the badis till light brown.
Add to the daal water.
Add salt, haldi, pepper and heeng.
Boil till the badis are soft.
Serve hot with the main meal, to be sipped between bites.

For Palak Jhol: Substitute vadis with finely chopped palak.



Ghassa

At the Jagannath temple water spiked with jaiphal, ghassa (or chandan) and camphor is offered at each bhog. The meal is considered incomplete without this accompaniment.

Meetha Pani

Mishri, elaichi and camphor in water is another popular accompaniment at the Srinathji temple.

Olan

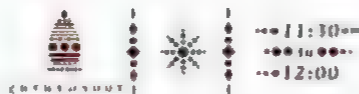
Served to neutralize the taste buds the wonderful thing about this dish is that it is tasteless!

Ingredients

100 gms kashiphal
100 gms petha
Salt to taste

Method

Peel, wash and chop the vegetables.
Soak in about 2 katoris of water and set to boil till very tender.
Add namak to taste.
You can have just the water or the vegetables as well.



Dahi Vada



11 10
12 11

Another favourite of the child Krishna. Shops around the Banke Bihari temple in Vrindavan serve a delectable version of this popular chaat dish. The shop where the everyday bhog is procured insists that no Raaj bhog offering is complete without dahi vada.

Ingredients

250 gms dhuli urad daal	½ tsp strong heeng
500 gms dahi set with full cream milk	1 tsp sendha namak
Scant pinch baking powder	½ tsp kala namak (rock salt)
Scant pinch baking soda	1 tsp mishri
1 litre boiling water	1 tbsp finely julienned adrak
1 tsp sabut kali mirch	1 tbsp finely chopped hara dhania
1 tsp jeera	Ghee to fry



Method

Soak the daal for 1 hour.

Drain well and grind very fine on a stone grinder.

Transfer into a deep dish and put oil to fry into a kadahi and heat.

Beat the ground daal with a light hand till white and fluffy.

To check if it is ready, drop a small globule into a pan of water. If it rises to the top immediately you have beaten it the right way.

Mix in the baking powder and baking soda.

Put the heeng and half the salt into the boiling water.

Heat ghee.

Drop walnut sized globules of the daal into the hot ghee and fry till golden.

Drain well and put into the boiling seasoned water.

Leave for a few minutes, then remove and place in a sieve for all the water to drain off. You could also press each vada gently to squeeze out the extra water.

Leave to cool.

Dry roast and grind the kali mirch and jeera to a fine powder.

Whisk the dahi with the remaining sendha namak and sugar.

When the vadas are cool dip in the dahi and place on a serving dish.

Pour the remaining dahi over.

Sprinkle the rock salt, jeera and kali mirch.

Garnish with the adrak juliennes and hara dhania.

Pour over imli ki chutney and serve cold.

Raita

An ubiquitous name for a dish that is truly ambrosial. Offered at the Jagannath temple, it tasted as good as it looked.

Ingredients

250 gms dahi (hung to drain water)

1 crisp apple chopped fine

100 gms kale angoor sliced lengthwise

1 mooll coarsely grated

¼ anaar (pomegranate) peeled

1 tsp jeera, dry roasted and ground

½ tsp whole kah mirch roasted and ground

Namak to taste

1 tsp sugar

¼ tsp kala namak

1 tsp finely grated Ambakori Adra

(mango flavoured adrak native to Orissa)

use adrak if you can't find it

1 tsp coarsely crushed hara mirch

3 tbsps finely chopped hara dhania



Method

Sprinkle the sugar over the dahi and leave to dissolve.

Whisk till smooth.

Mix all the other ingredients together and then pour the dahi over and mix well.

Leave covered for at least 15 minutes for the flavours to develop.



Namkeen Raita



11:30 AM
to
12:00

Ingredients

Choose from:

Kakri (skinny gourd) grated or chopped fine, Kachnar ki kali (mountain ebony buds) boiled, aloo boiled and cubed, baingan roasted and mashed, long baingan sliced fine and deep fried, leelva boiled and mashed, handful of palak, chopped and steamed, ghiya grated.

1 tsp very finely ground rai

½ tsp jeera

Pinch heeng

1 tsp ghee

¼ tsp sendha namak

A pinch of kala namak

A very small piece of mishri

2 katoris dahi

Method

Put the dahi into a fine muslin cloth to drain.

Beat well with the namak and mishri and add rai powder and vegetable of your choice.

Mix well.

Heat the ghee and add heeng and jeera and pour over the raita and mix well.



11:30 AM
to
12:00

Meetha Raita

Ingredients

Choose from:

Mango pulp, kharbooza pulp, kishmish soaked in water, angoor white or black, half pineapple cut into small pieces, apple grated or cut into small cubes

2 katoris dahi

¼ katori mishri

A pinch of baras

2-3 pods of crushed choti elaichi

Method

Put the dahi into a fine muslin cloth to drain.

Remove and mix with mishri till it dissolves.

Add the fruit of your choice, baras and elaichi.



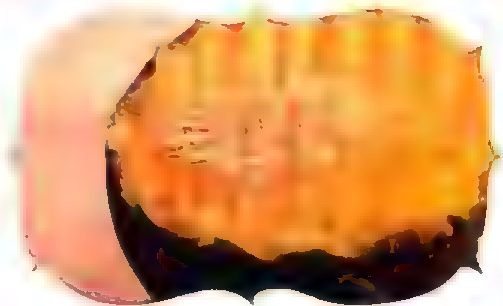
Murabba



••• 11.30 •••
••• 12.00 •••

11 Made with different fruits the murabbas that we tasted in Srinathji temple were nothing like the heavily sugar coated versions that go
12 by the same name and are commercially available. Delicately flavoured and light these added a whole new (sweet) dimension to the
13 Prasul. It delights the eye and pampers the tongue alike and has never failed to draw 'oohs' and 'ahh's on the occasions we have served
14 it at home.





Ingredients

Choose from :

- 1 banana - very thinly sliced
- 1 apple - grated or minced very fine with skin
- 1 raw mango - peeled and minced very fine
- Kharbooza - cut into tiny pieces
- Papaya-cut into tiny pieces
- Shareefa (custard apple) - pulped
- 1 katori mishm
- Water to make a 1 taar chashni
- 8-9 strands kesar
- 2-3 pods crushed choti elaichi
- A pinch of baras

Method

Make a 1 taar chashni with the water and sugar and add elaichi, kesar and baras and cool slightly.

Add the fruit of your choice and leave covered for a few minutes for the flavours to develop before serving.

Fruit Rasa

Sweet and sour and very refreshing, this marks the beginning of the end of the meal at the Govindaji temple. It is served over boiled rice.

Ingredients

Choose from the following sour fruits:

1 Haibong, 3 orange, 3-4 lemons, 1 pineapple, 100 gms imli, 4-5 plums,

3-4 tbsp sugar if using haibong or imli as both are very sour, 2 tbsp sugar for orange, plums or pineapple

½ tsp namak

Method

Boil the fruit till just soft.

Add sugar and salt and serve.



Paan is served at every temple either at the end of a prahar such as Raj bhog or at the end of the day at Shayan bhog. The paan ka patta (beetle leaf) is an essential part of any pooja as it is considered auspicious and paan is a befitting end to any bhog as it is not only important as 'mukhwas' (mouth freshener) but also because it is considered a luxury so devotees are delighted to offer it to their beloved Lord.

Called beeda, this pan does not have kattha (catechu) and chuna (lime) but only aromatics like baras, spices like lavang and elaichi and mishri as a sweetener. Gulkand is added occasionally.



The Raas Lila in Braj is performed with great devotion and is a very important and significant part of the culture of this region. It is performed very ritualistically and the onlookers are filled with such devotion that they regard the actors playing the roles of the gods as 'Bhagwan Swaroop' or Real Gods.

One day a devotee urges his atheist friend to accompany him to the Raas Lila. The atheist agrees on the condition that he will go wearing an eye band. After the performance and the concluding arti, Thakurji is offered pan. He takes a bite and then gestures to the devotee to bring his blind folded friend to whom he offers the other half of the pan. After eating the pan the atheist falls madly in love with Thakurji and becomes a staunch devotee.



Awakened from rest, the deity is offered fresh fruit.

Fruits are the ultimate result of all acts. The Gita therefore emphasizes that by offering the fruits or results, one offers or dedicates the entire deed at the feet of the Lord. Thus offering of fruits bears a significant symbology in Hinduism.

All varieties of fruits can be offered to God, but coconut is the most common and has special significance. The smooth outer skin of the coconut represents man's gross body. Within the gross body is the subtle body of mind, represented by the matted coir of the coconut, indicating the entangled desires and attachments of the man with the outer world.

The hard shell within this represents the causal body and the white fruit inside the kernel represents the True Self. The significance of the ritual when you hand over the coconut to the priest is as follows: only the hard shell, with a little tuft of the coir on the top of the coconut and not the whole coconut with its outer covering and coir is taken into the temple. This indicates that we have left all worldly desires before entering the temple.

The coir on top represents the remaining desire related to spiritual growth. The priest now tears away this remaining bunch of coir (depicting that no desires are now left), breaks the hard shell representing transcendence of the causal body and reveals the kernel, depicting revelation of the true Self.

••• 04:00pm
••• to •••
••• 05:30pm





== (15:01) ==

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Sheetal Samagri

www.rahulraj.com



05:00pm
to
06:30pm



The carbohydrate rich afternoon meal ensures that Krishna lies in relaxed repose. The natkhat balak however sneaks out sometime during the warm afternoon to frolic at the riverside with his playmates till he realizes that he will be missed at home and reluctantly leaves his lively playmates in a hurry. Expectedly Yashoda is waiting at the door, a glass of sheetal samagri in her hands. She sits her son down and mops the sweat off his brow as he sips the softly scented crystalline liquid. It takes only a moment to work its cooling magic...



Ingredients

- 1 litre water that has been stored in a matka (you could use a bottle of water from the fridge!)
- 1 katori mishri
- $\frac{3}{4}$ katori very good quality gulab jal
- 3-4 pods choti elaichi powder
- 1 pinch baras crushed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp sabut kali mirch soaked and finely ground



Method

- Ensure that the vessel you use be anything other than steel and aluminum.
- Dissolve the mishri in the cool water.
- Add all the other ingredients and continue mixing.
- Sieve the entire contents through a fine white muslin cloth.
- Pour into a silver glass and serve.
- Cool down....

Santhe ka ras

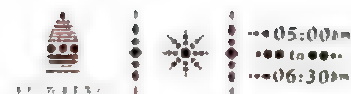
Used to the ginger laced, ganne ka ras at crushers all over small town markets, we found this variation lightly flavoured and very refreshing.

Ingredients

1 stick fresh ganna (sugarcane)
2-3 tbsp boora
2 crushed choti elaichis
5-6 ice cubes
A few pudina (mint) leaves chopped fine

Method

Wash the sugarcane well and extract the juice.
(You could do this by putting through a juicer or grating the sugarcane and squeezing out the juice).
Mix in the boora, ice cubes and elaichi and stir well.
Strain the juice into pretty serving glasses.
Garnish with the finely chopped pudina leaves.



Munakka sharbat

Munakka is the larger version of raisins and is dried in a special way. It has great health benefits - cures anaemia, piles and is intensely cooling in the summer heat. Especially beneficial against the infamous heatwave or 'loo' of the Northern plains in India.

Ingredients

250 gms munakka
5-6 choti elaichi powder
10 strands kesar soaked
50 gms boora
Scant pinch baras
2 litres cold water

Method

Clean the munakkas, wash, soak for at least 4 hours and then grind as finely as possible.
Sieve through a muslin cloth.
Add all the remaining ingredients and rest in a cool place for an hour or so.
Serve in clear pretty glasses.



Saunf ka sharbat

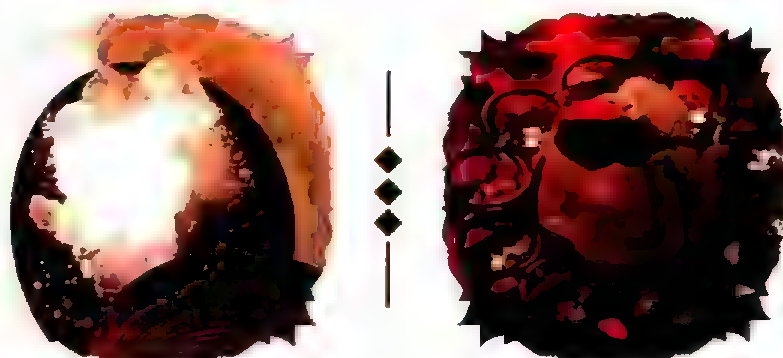
This one is a classic example of how with minimal simple ingredients a delicious and effective dish is made by the temple rasooyas to please the Lord. Very cooling and refreshing.

Ingredients

100 gms saunf
3-4 pods choti elaichi crushed or powdered
¾ katori mishri
Water to soak
Water to thin down

Method

Soak all the ingredients in water till the mishri dissolves and saunf softens.
Grind to a fine paste and mix enough water to get a drinking consistency checking for sweetness.
Pass through fine muslin cloth, pour into a glass and serve.



Aamras



In the secular context, aam ka panna is made with green mangoes. While offering Bhog to the child Krishna however, the palate being more conducive to sweet tastes, only ripe dassehri or kesar kairis renowned for their flavor and sweetness are used.

Ingredients

1 kg dassehri or kesar kairi mangoes
1 katori mishri
Good pinch baras
½ tsp choti elaichi powder
1 tsp finely minced pista

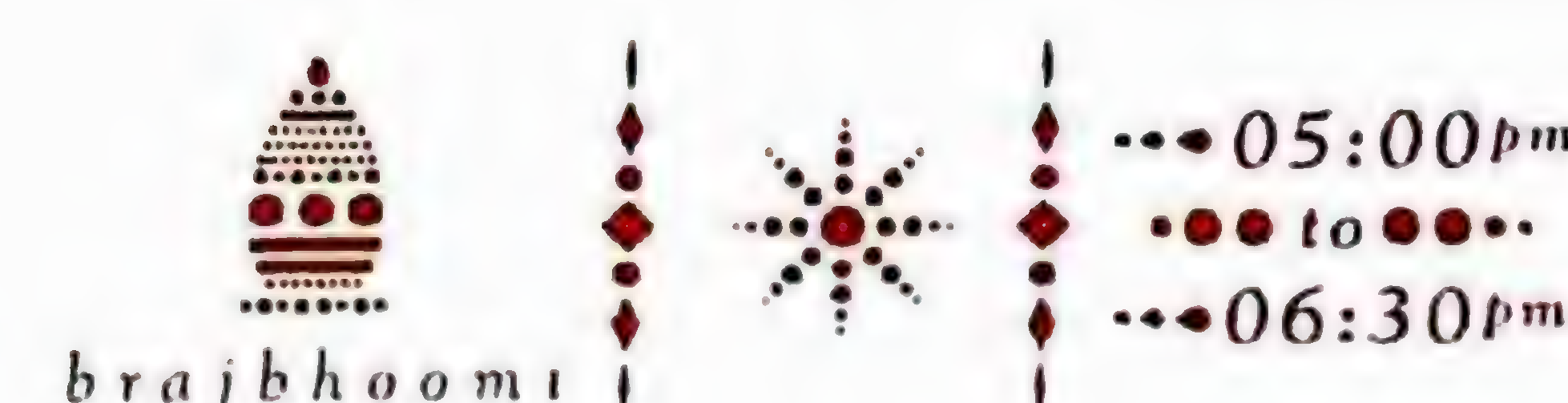
Method

Peel and cut mangoes.
Wash a jute sieve and sieve mango pieces through it.
This gives the panna a distinct flavour.
Mix in the rest of the ingredients and allow to rest till the mishri dissolves.
Add enough water to reach the desired consistency (it will be thick but drinkable).
Pour into a glass and garnish with finely minced green pista.



Giriraj ji, Goverdhan

Aam ka panna (with raw mangoes)



During the hot northern summer the juicy sweetness of ripe mangoes seems the only way to tolerate the unbearable heat. Mangoes regrettably have a hot 'taseer' so usually one is advised to eat them sparingly lest one breaks out in heat boils. Happily though, this is one of the most effective (and delicious) ways of bringing down body temperature naturally. Browning the mangoes in a tandoor or on the open flame or alternately boiling them apparently draws out the element of 'heat'.

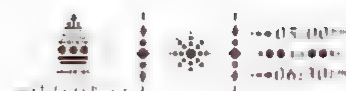
Ingredients

1 kg raw mangoes
1½ kgs mishri
A bunch of pudina
1 tsp jeera
1½ tsp kala namak
4-5 pods of choti elaichi powdered
Good pinch baras
Water to thin down

Method

Roast the mangoes on an open flame/tandoor or simply boil them if that is not possible. Boiling will however compromise the delightful smoky flavor of the former.
Dry roast the jeera till dark brown and crisp and keep aside.
Wash and clean the pudina leaves and tear into small pieces.
Skin the mangoes and sieve the pulp into a bowl.
Add the rest of the ingredients except jeera and pudina and let it rest till the mishri dissolves completely.
Now add enough water to get the desired consistency (not too thick but pleasantly so).
Pour into a glass and crush a good pinch of jeera and garnish with the pudina.
Store the remaining panna in a bottle.

Kharbooze ka panna

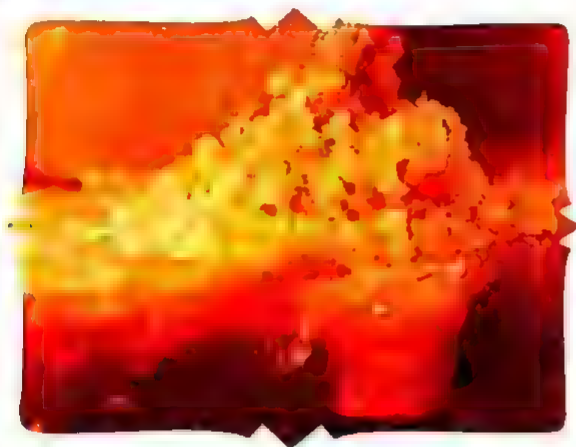


Ingredients

1 large kharbooza (any variety of melon)
Mishri as needed depending on the natural
sweetness of the fruit
3 pods choti elaichi crushed
A few strands of kesar
A good pinch of baras

Method

Cut the melon and make a pulp by mashing and then sieving.
Sprinkle the mishri, kesar, baras and elaichi and mix well.
Add enough cold water for a drinkable consistency.
Pour into a clear glass to serve cold.



Tarbooz ka panna



This bright pink drink with strands of green pudina begins to work its cooling magic at first sight.

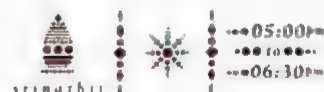
Ingredients

One ripe red tarbooz (water melon)
¼ katori mishri (more or less depending on the
natural sweetness of the fruit)
Juice of two lemons
A handful of pudina torn finely

Method

Chop or grate the watermelon and extract the juice by
passing through a sieve.
Add all the other ingredients and mix well.
Cool and serve.

Sattua



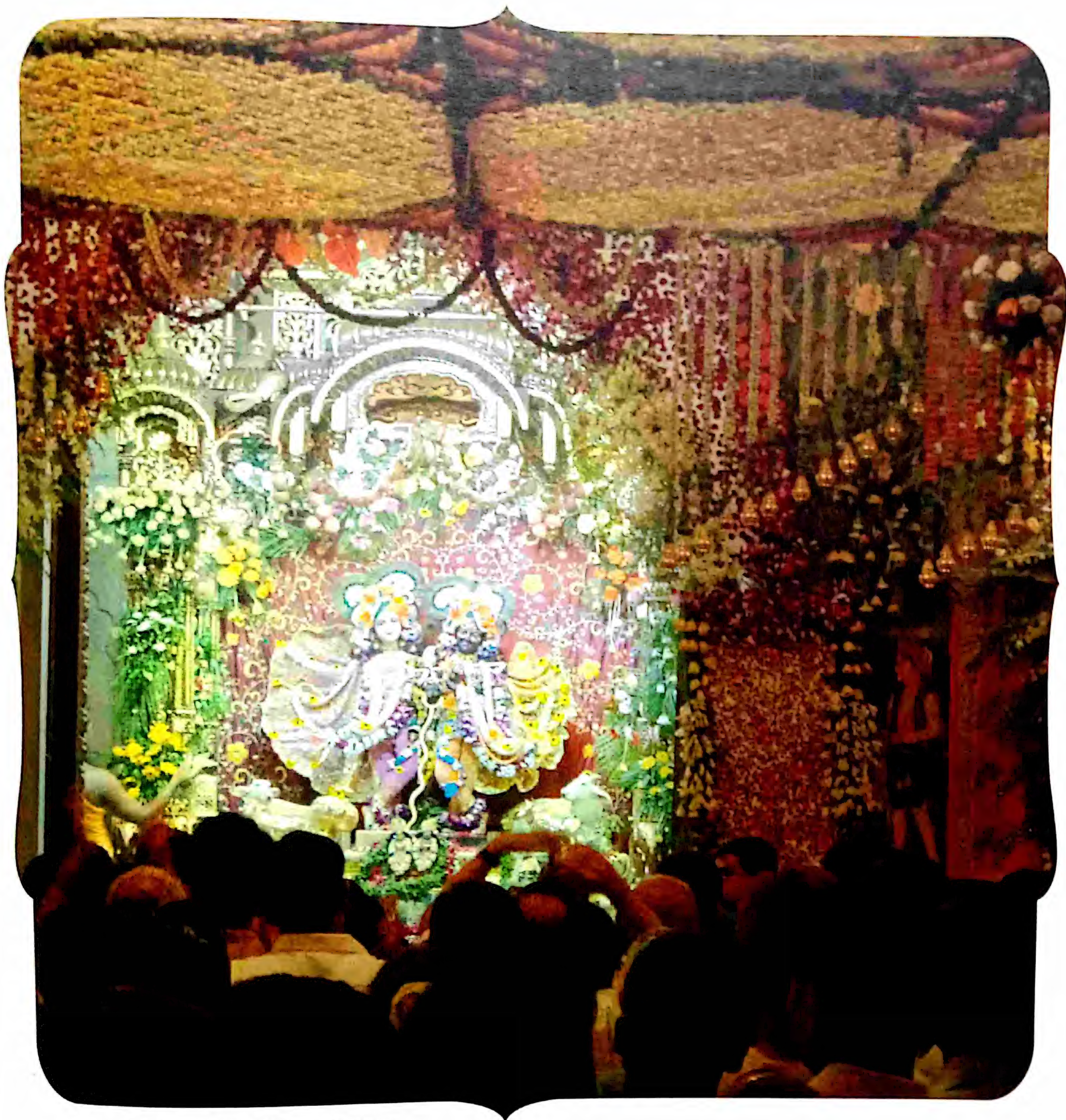
Relies on the naturally cooling taseer of sattu and is a popular drink all over the North of India during the fiery summer.

Ingredients

½ katori channa daal
¼ katori gulab jal
2-3 pods crushed choti elaichi
¼ katori mishri
Water to thin down

Method

Dry roast the daal and grind to a fine powder.
Mix in all the other ingredients and enough water to reach
the consistency of a drink.
Cool and serve.



Phool Bangla at ISCKON Temple, Vrindavan





Pokharo

2 versions of this amazingly refreshing drink that is reputed to be one of the most effective ways to combat the humid heat of Orissa. We actually saw people filling bottles to take away with them.

Ingredients

2 liters left over rice water
 4 inch piece ambokuri ada, crushed coarsely
 (special mango flavoured adrak native to puri)
 5 nimbu leaves
 5 santara leaves
 Juice of 2 nimbus (lemons)
 Juice of 1 santara (oranges)
 1 santara, sliced
 2 nimbus, sliced
 2 tsp samudri namak (sea salt)
 2 tsp coarse paste of hari mirch and adrak
 2 tsp roasted jeera coarsely crushed
 1 tsp kala namak

Method

Mix all the ingredients well and serve.

For Dahi Pokharo, omit the oranges and lemon-juice and slices-and add 3 tbsp sour dahi, beaten well, and a bunch of finely chopped hara dhania.

Thandai

Synonymous with Holi when it is spiked with bhang and an integral part of the hot northern summers, this is an intensely cooling and stunningly delicious drink. Thandai is popular in every pilgrim town and a compulsory bhog item in summer. At Nathdwara we watched fascinatedly as a bare-chested dhoti-clad 'bhaiyya' made thandai from freshly ground ingredients.

Ingredients

10 badams
10 pistas
2 tsp magaz (mixed seeds)
10 sabut kali mirch
5 choti elaichi
1 heaped tbsp saunf
1 litre milk
Mishri to taste



Method

Boil the milk and leave to cool.

Soak the nuts and magaz.

Separately soak the saunf, kali mirch, elaichi and mishri.

Grind the nuts to a smooth paste.

Grind the other ingredients to a fine paste.

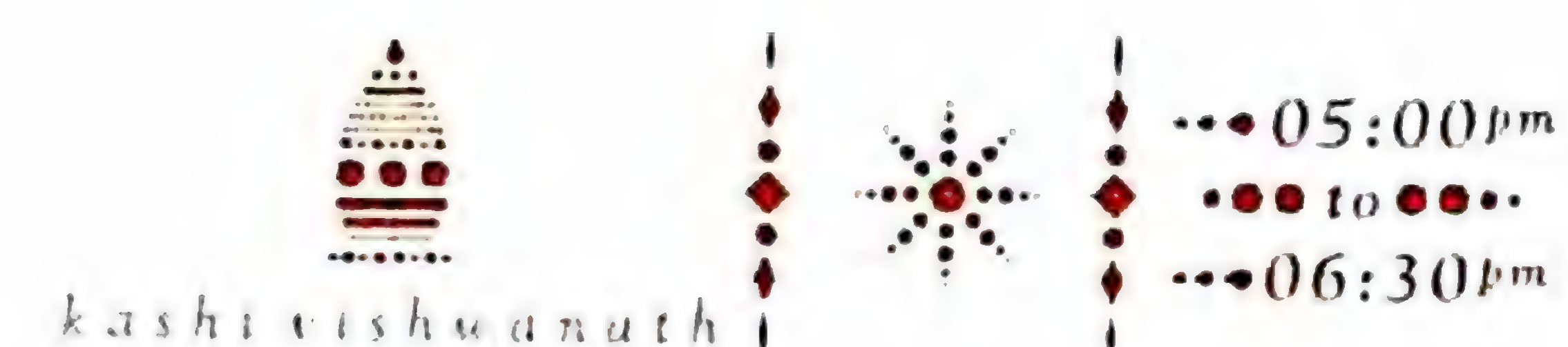
Mix both pastes into the milk and add 10-12 cubes of ice.

Whisk together vigourously and strain into glasses.

Serve ice cold.



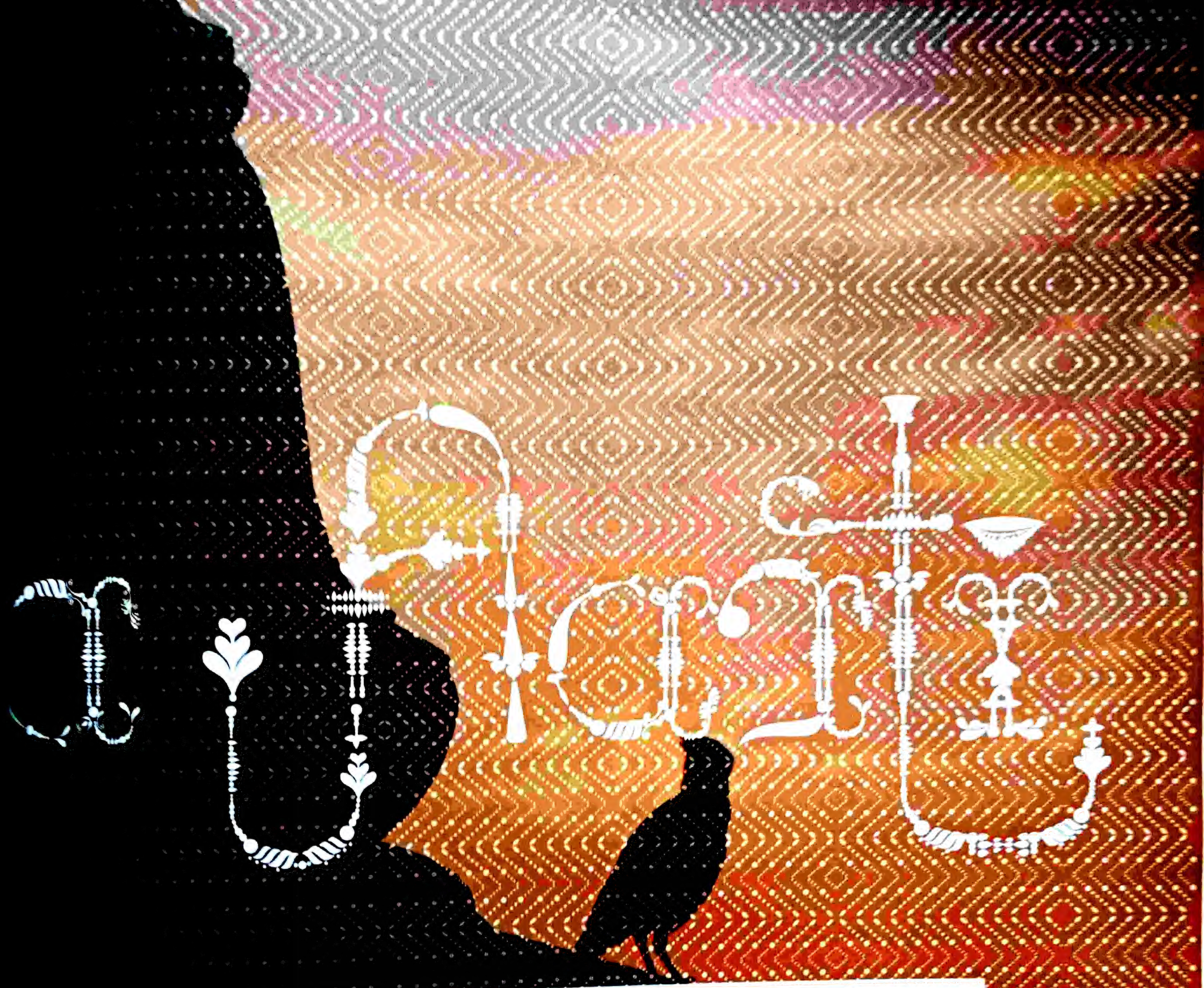
Phoolon ki thandai



Choose from: Gaienda (Marigold), Gulab (Indian Rose), Bela (Arabian Jasmine) flowers.
Wash well, pluck petals and grind. Add to the milk along with the nut and aromatic pastes.







The usual offering at this prahar includes one Anasakhari (fried) and one dry mewa (dry fruit) fried and salted and is preceded by an aarti heralding the evening.

••• 06:00 pm
••• 10 •••
••• 07:45 pm

Namkeen Paneer

Ingredients

1 kg paneer cut into cubes
Ghee to fry
Sendha namak and kali mirch powder to taste

Method

Heat the ghee and fry the paneer cubes till golden.
Drain well.
Sprinkle namak and kali mirch.
Mix well.

Namkeen badams, namkeen aloo and namkeen moongphali can also be made in the same way and offered at Sandhya bhog. They are also delightful accompaniments at Rajbhog.



Namkeen Channa Daal

Ingredients

250 gms chana daal
Water to soak
Salt to taste
Pinch baking soda
1 tbsp sabut kali mirch
Ghee to fry



Method

Pick, wash and soak daal in warm water to which a pinch of soda has been added for half an hour.
Drain well.
Heat ghee and fry the drained dal on medium flame till golden and crisp.
Remove with a poni and drain.
Sprinkle namak and freshly ground kali mirch.



The following ingredients are sent to Kashi Vishvanath temple from the Narkottam Ksetram i.e. the main mandir and pujaris carry them in a procession every evening to the accompaniment of bugles and drums: 5 kinds of fruits, mewa and pan.

Adrak ki Bati

An aromatic and warming winter snack, the ginger perks up the crispy fried dough. We thought they were namak paras till the bite of adrak hit us.



Ingredients

1 kg maida
100 gms adrak finely chopped or grated
1 tsp namak
½ tsp heeng
2 tbsp ghee
Ghee to fry

Method

Heat two spoons of ghee.
Add adrak and sauté.
Keep aside.
Heat remaining ghee and pour scatteredly into maida.
Put already fried adrak, salt and heeng.
Mix well adding just enough water to hold together.
Heat the ghee.
Make small bati by rolling out the dough and cutting into cubes and fry on moderate to low flame till golden brown and crisp.
Drain the excess ghee and serve warm.

Mixture

Ingredients

1 katori (poha) rice flakes
½ katori chana daal
½ katori moong dhuli daal
½ katori moongphali
½ katori kishmish
1 katori makhane (foxnut)
1 katori milk
Sendha namak to taste
1 tsp kali mirch powder
½ tsp kala namak
1 tsp amchur
1 tsp mishri powder
2 tsp ghee
¼ tsp heeng
Ghee to fry

Method

Soak the daals separately in a milk and water mixture overnight.
Drain and dry well with a cloth.
Heat ghee and add daal little by little into the ghee, when it floats it means it is cooked.
Remove from the ghee and leave to drain.
Fry the rice flakes and leave to drain.
Fry the moongphalis till golden and leave to drain.
Fry the kishmish and drain and finally fry the makhanas.
Mix all the fried ingredients together and sprinkle sendha namak, kali mirch, amchur, mishri and kala namak.
Mix well.
Heat 2 tsp ghee and add heeng and pour over the mixture.
Mix well and serve.

Once Kubera the God of wealth invited Lord Ganesha to dinner. Ganesha ate all the food that was prepared for the entire gathering of guests. Thereafter, still dissatisfied, he started eating the festive decorations. At this juncture his father Lord Shiva approached him and offered him a handful of roasted rice. Ganesha consumed the roasted rice and his hunger was satisfied immediately.

This story is a directive to mankind that man can never be satisfied with the joys provided by the world of objects represented by Kubera's feast. Material pursuits can never give peace, contentment or happiness to mankind. The only way to attain absolute fulfilment or peace is by consuming your own vasanas - unmanifest desires. The destruction of vasanus is represented by the consumption of roasted rice as when rice is roasted it loses its capacity to germinate hence its consumption indicates the destruction of desires within. Thereafter you remain in a state of absolute peace and bliss.

Kharkhari

Double frying makes these so crisp that a crunchy sound 'khar, khar' is emitted when you bite into it, hence the name.

Ingredients

½ kg maida
1½ katoris ghee
Ghee to fry

Method

Add half the ghee into maida and mix it well.
Add water to make a tough dough.
Take a small walnut sized roundel of the dough and roll it out into a small, thick poori.
Deep fry in ghee on a low flame till light brown.
Remove and drain.
Make a hole in this poori and deep fry again on both sides.

Khurma / Petha / Namak Para



The basic dough for all three remains the same but the name indicates the shape of the savories. Khurma are tiny squares, pethas larger rectangles and namak paras large diagonals.

Ingredients

1 kg maida

250 gms ghee

Ghee to fry

1 ½ tsp sendha namak



Method

Mix ghee and namak into the maida and add water to form a tough dough.

Leave to rest for about half an hour and then roll out to ½ inch thickness.

Cut into the desired shape.

Heat ghee over moderate to low flame and fry the savories till golden brown.

Remove and leave to drain.

To make Shakkar Paras

Omit salt, increase the amount of ghee in the dough to 300 gms and after frying and draining make a powdery chashni with about 3 katoris of sugar and ½ katori water and quickly toss in the paras, moving around rapidly till they are all sugar coated.

Note that the chashni must begin to whiten before tossing in the paras.



Kapoor Nari

Ingredients

½ kg maida
Ghee to fry
½ katori finely chopped badam, pista, boora, choti elaichi powder
1 tsp jaiphal, javitri, lavang powder in winter / gulab rooh in summer
10-12 whole lavang

Method

Knead a tough dough with maida, water and the seasonal flavouring. After about half an hour, roll out very thin pooris. Make stacks of 5 pooris, separating each by sprinkling a little ghee and maida. On the top most layer spread the dry fruit mixture along the edges and seal by pulling the edges into the center. Secure with a single clove. Heat ghee and fry the poori stacks on medium till crispy. Drain very well and allow to cool slightly before serving.

Chakuli



Ingredients

6 cups raw rice
1½ cups black gram daal
2 cups coconut milk
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 pinch of turmeric powder
2 lemon-size lumps of butter
Ghee for deep frying
Salt to taste

Method

Roast black gram daal till it turns golden and keep for cooling. After it cools, powder it finely and keep aside. Wash rice thrice, drain and dry it in shade for half an hour. Powder it finely. Mix both the powders. Add coconut milk and salt. Blend in cumin seeds and butter. Mix into dough and knead well. (A little water can be added if the dough is too stiff). Put the dough in chakuli mould or any other shape and press into hot ghee. Deep fry until golden brown on a low flame. Drain well and store in an air-tight container.



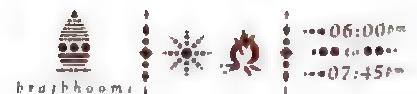
Kharmanda

Ingredients

½ kg maida
Ghee to fry
½ katori boora
¼ tsp green elaichi powder
Pinch baras in summer / lavang powder in winter

Method

Knead a tough dough with the maida and water and leave to rest a while. Heat ghee. Roll out very thin pooris and fry just a minute on each side. Stack pooris into 5's while still hot. Sprinkle the bura mixture along the outer edges of the poori stack, then close the edges by bringing into the center and press down firmly. Serve as soon as possible.



Besan Sev

Ingredients

1 kg besan
100-150 gms ghee (depends on whether you want it very crisp or moderately so)
Sendha namak to taste
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp hing
1 heaped tsp ajwain
Ghee to fry

Method

Sieve the besan with salt and add hing and ajwain.
Heat the ghee and mix into the besan.
Bind into a hard dough with water.
Heat ghee and grate the dough through the finest section of a grater directly into the hot ghee, frying on medium to high heat till lightly browned.
Remove and leave to drain.
For besan papri use the chips slicer of the grater and for ghatia use the largest section of the grater.



06.00pm
07.45pm



Radha Kund, Braj

Besan ki Boondia (Namkeen)



06-11-15
17-4-15

Ingredients

1 kg besan
250 gms ghee
Sendha namak to taste
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp ajwain
½ tsp heeng
Ghee to fry

Method

Sieve the maida with the soda and add ajwain, heeng and ghee.

Mix well. Add water to make a thick batter.

Heat the ghee and pass the batter through a poni (flat ladle with holes) into the hot ghee.

The boondias will rise to the top.

Remove when light brown and sprinkle with sendha namak immediately for it to get absorbed into the hot boondia.

Mix well and leave to drain.



Boondi



Literally meaning 'drop', these are a popular offering to the monkey god Hanuman. On Tuesdays, mithai shops all over India will have mounds of orange drops dripping syrupy nectar on huge thaals placed on counters.

Devotees come asking for boondi worth 5, 11, 21, 51 and so on as the pledged offering to their beloved Bajrangbali.

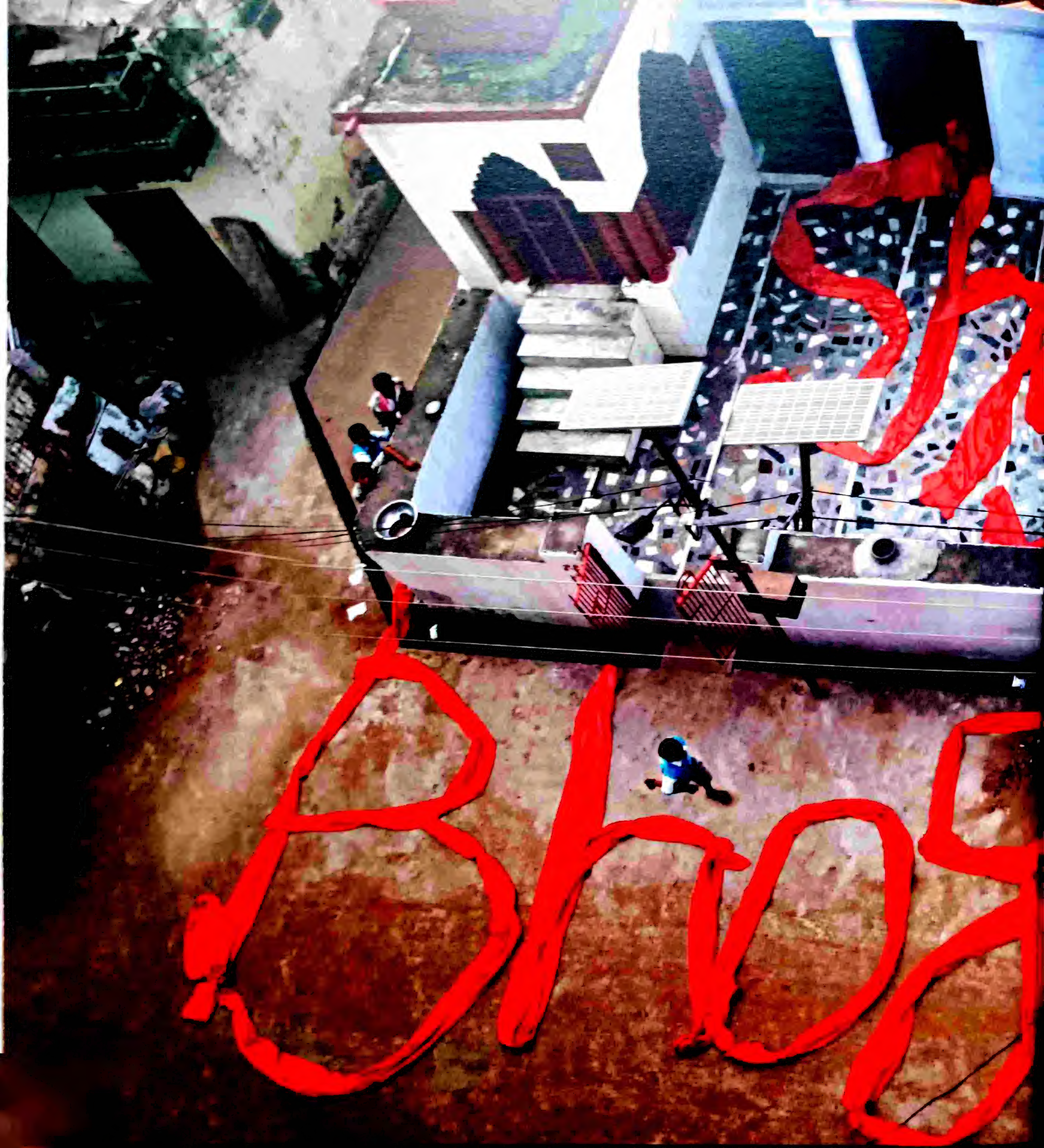


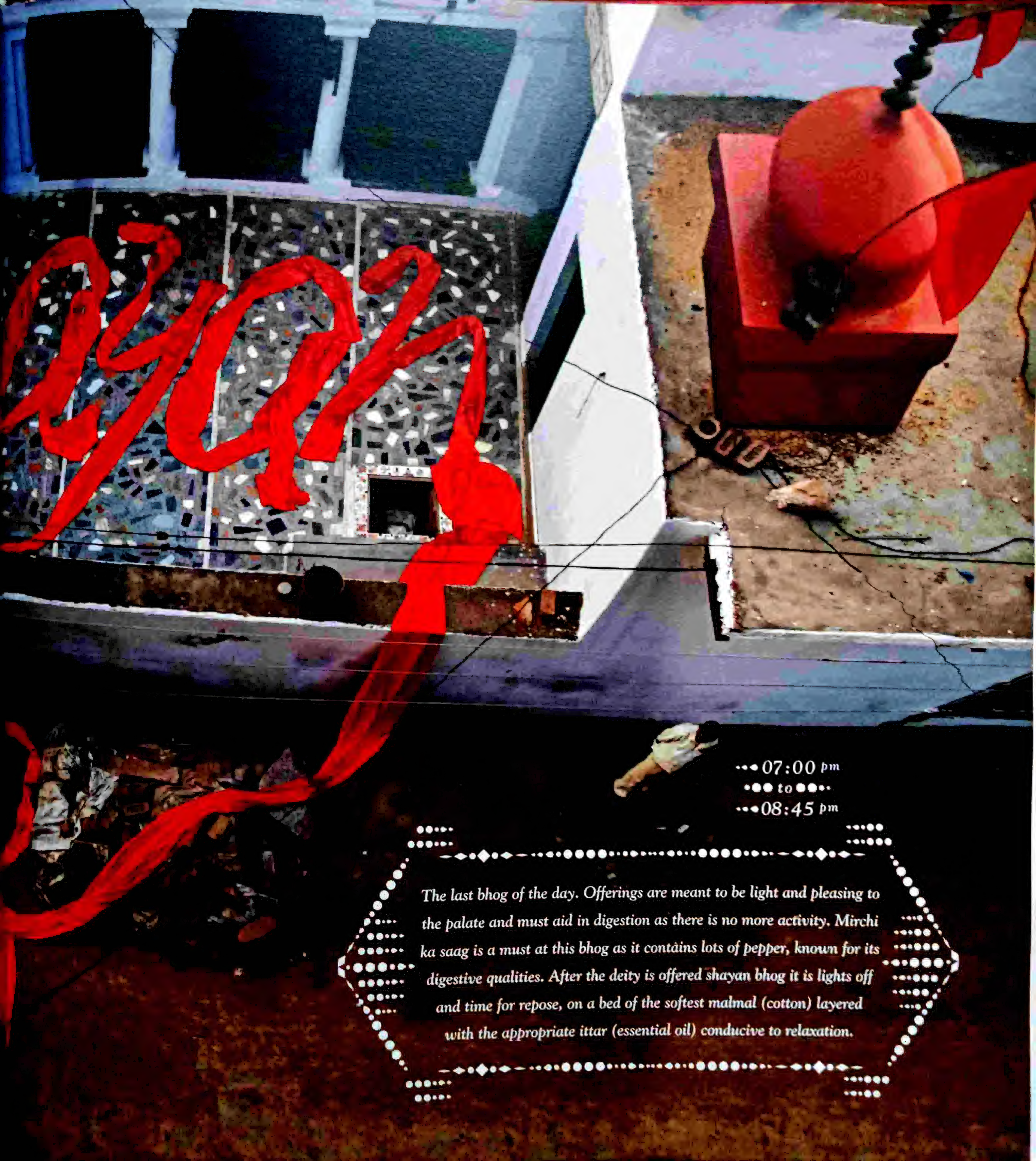
Ingredients

- 1 kg besan
- 2 kgs sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp orange food colour
- 1 tsp kesar strands soaked in a little warm milk
- 2 tsp choti elaichi powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ katori gulab jal
- Ghee to fry
- 1 tsp baking soda

Method

Mix besan with baking soda and make a thick batter with water. Heat the ghee and when very hot put a ladleful into the batter and mix well. Pour the batter through a poni into the hot ghee and fry till the boondis swim and turn a tempting brown. Make a 2 taar chashni with the sugar and enough water and add kesar, orange food colour and gulab jal. Drop the fried boondis into the chashni and leave for a few minutes. Now strain them out and sprinkle with elaichi powder. These can also be dunked into hot milk for a lovely instant desert.





••• 07:00 pm

••• to •••

••• 08:45 pm

The last bhog of the day. Offerings are meant to be light and pleasing to the palate and must aid in digestion as there is no more activity. Mirchi ka saag is a must at this bhog as it contains lots of pepper, known for its digestive qualities. After the deity is offered shayan bhog it is lights off and time for repose, on a bed of the softest malmal (cotton) layered with the appropriate ittar (essential oil) conducive to relaxation.

Mirchi ka Saag

Unusually spicy with the addition of a generous amount of kali mirch, this is an integral part of Shayan bhog, because of the proven digestive quality of the kalimirch. Any vegetable or combination of vegetables is acceptable as long as it is well spiced.





Ingredients

Choose from any of the following as per season or you could use a combination:

ghiya, matar, kashiphal, arbi, petha, baingan, parwal - ½ kg

2 tsp besan

1 tsp sabut kali mirch

1 tsp jeera

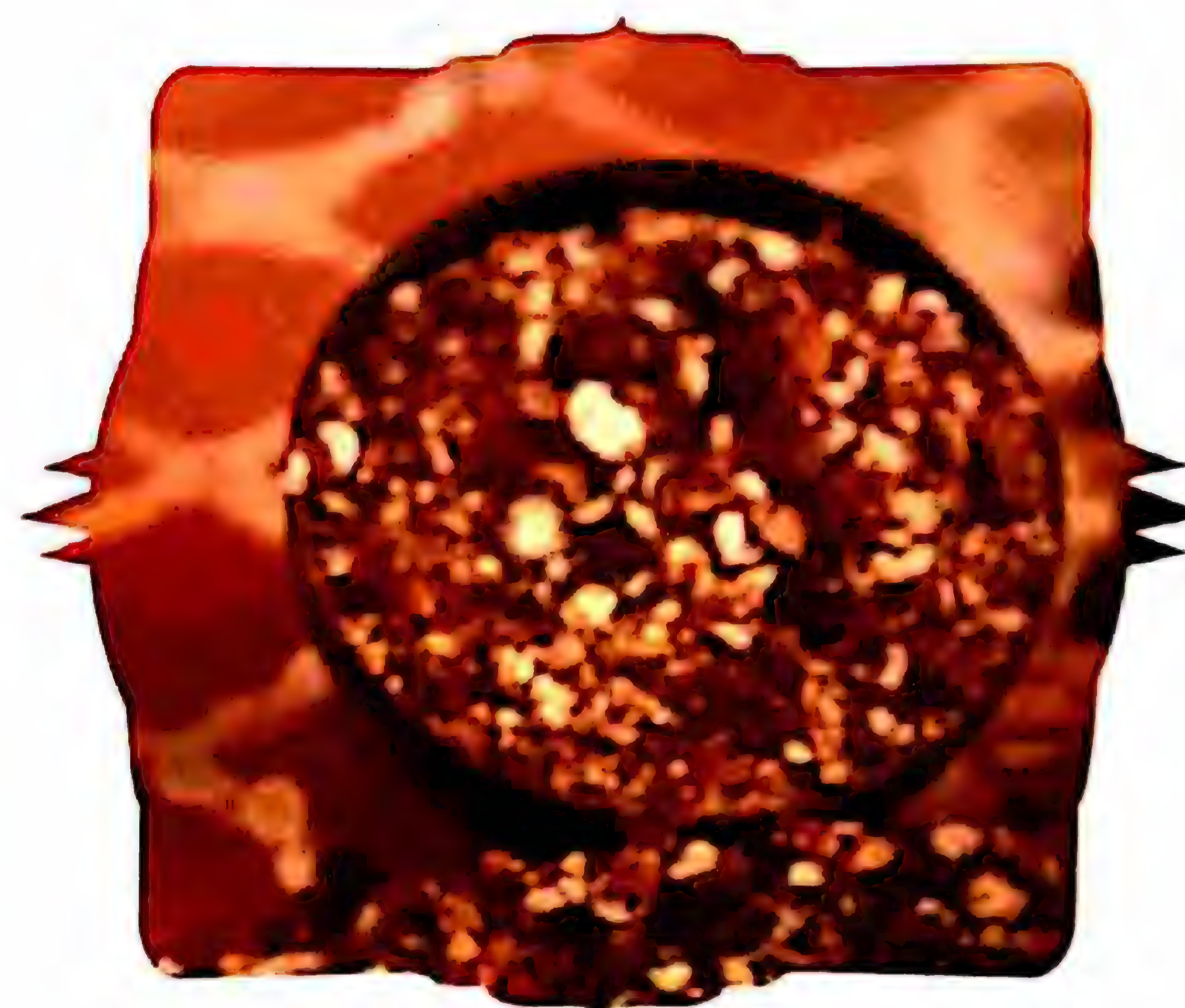
Pinch heeng

Namak to taste

¼ tsp haldi

1 tsp dhania powder

A generous tbsp of ghee



Method

Cut the vegetables you are using into small pieces and set to steam with just a sprinkle of water.

Coarsely grind the sabut kali mirch.

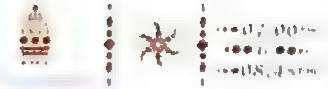
Mix all the masala powders and besan together with a katori of water and add to the vegetables when they are tender but still hold their shape.

Simmer for a few minutes to cook the spices and slightly thicken the gravy, then remove from heat.

Heat the ghee and add heeng and jeera.

When the jeera browns pour the baghaar over the prepared subzi and cover to trap the aroma.

Poori



Any festive meal in India must include pooris. They are made with different attas in different regions but each one is equally delicious.

Ingredients

2 katoris whole wheat atta
1 tsp sendha namak
2 tbsp ghee
Water to bind
Ghee to fry

Method

Sieve salt and atta into a parath (deep thali).

Add the ghee and rub in.

Add water a little at a time kneading well till you have a smooth but firm dough.

Heat ghee to smoking. Test by dropping a tiny globule.

If it rises and starts to change colour ghee is ready.

Break off a walnut sized piece of the dough and roll out pooris of slight thickness.

Immerse gently into the hot oil and press lightly with your poni (perforated spoon).

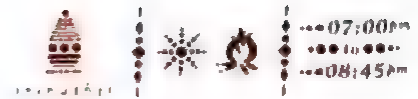
The puri will begin to puff up. Turn and cook till golden on both sides.

Remove from ghee and drain on colander.

Serve immediately.



Thapari



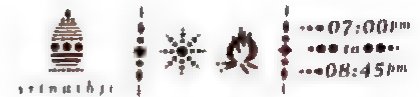
Ingredients

½ kg besan made with chana daal
Salt to taste
2 tsp ajwain in winter/jeera in summer
¼ tsp heeng
1 tsp kali mirch
½ katori maida
Ghee to fry

Method

Mix besan, salt, ajwain/jeera.
Crush kali mirch and add.
Dissolve hing in a little water and add to the besan mix.
Make a tough dough by adding water.
Roll out very thin pooris, paltoing in the maida if they stick.
Heat ghee and fry on low flame till crisp. Drain well and cool before serving.

Leelve ki Pakori



Another seasonal delight as hare channe are only available in winter. The lavang imparts a lovely flavour and is also useful for its heating 'taseer' and antiseptic properties.

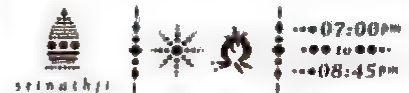
Ingredients

250 gms leelva (fresh green gram)
Besan as required
¼ tsp baking soda
1 tsp sendha namak or to taste
1 tsp jeera
¼ tsp heeng
Pinch lavang powder
1 tsp grated ginger
¼ tsp freshly crushed kali mirch
2 tbsp ghee
Ghee to fry

Method

Wash the green chanas well and grind to a puree.
Add all the spices and mix.
Now add baking soda and small quantities of besan till you have a thick batter.
Pour in the 2 tbsp ghee and beat well.
Heat ghee and drop small pakoris into the hot ghee.
Fry till golden brown and crisp.
Remove with a poni and drain well.
Pile onto a serving dish and dust with sendha namak.
Serve immediately.
These can also be put into kadhi.

Khasa Poori



Richer and thicker than the normal poori.

Ingredients

½ kg coarsely ground whole wheat atta
150 gms ghee
Salt to taste
2 tsp ajwain in winter/2 tsp jeera in summer
Ghee to fry

Method

Mix all the dry ingredients and rub the 150 gms ghee into the atta.
Bind with water into a hard dough and leave to rest for about half an hour.
Roll out into small pooris of about ½ inch thickness.
Heat ghee and check temperature by dropping in a tiny roundel of dough. If it rises quickly the ghee is just right.
Now slide in poori and fry on low flame till a nice brown in colour. Drain well.
Serve hot.

Bedmi

Stuffed pooris that are a speciality all over North India and offered on special occasions. These are usually accompanied by aloo ki subzi (gravy) and one dry seasonal vegetable or kashiphal.

Ingredients

250 gms whole wheat atta
1 tsp sooji
1 tsp sendha namak
1 tsp ghee
Water as required
Ghee to fry

For the filling

100 gms urad dhuli daal
1 tsp sendha namak
1 tsp saunf lightly roasted and crushed
1 tsp sabut dhanialy lightly roasted and crushed
¼ tsp heeng soaked in 1 tsp water
½ tsp garam masala powder
¼ tsp amchur powder
1 tsp ghee

Method

Mix atta, sendha namak, sooji and ghee and add small quantities of water to bind. Knead to a smooth but firm dough.
Soak the dal for an hour, drain and grind to a coarse paste.
Heat the ghee and add the masalas and heeng paste. Sauté a minute and add the daal paste.
Sauté till dry, remove and cool.
Heat oil in a kadahi.
Break off a small portion of the atta and make a depression in the center.
Fill in about a tsp of the dal mixture and close the edges around the mixture.
Flatten gently around the sides and then roll with a very light hand taking care that the sides don't split.
Check the oil for readiness and immerse the bedmi in the hot oil.
Press down gently till the bedmi puffs up. Flip over and brown on the other side as well.
Remove from the oil and drain in a colander.
Serve immediately with aloo ki subzi and kashiphal.



The spectacular Ganga arti at Varanasi

Radha Vallabh



The Bengali version of the bedmi made with a stuffing of chana daal. Traditionally refined flour (maida) is used, but the mix of whole wheat and refined flours makes for a healthier and equally delicious version.

Ingredients

100 gms maida
150 gms whole wheat flour
1 tsp sendha namak
2 tbsp ghee
Oil/ghee to fry

For the filling

3 tbsp chana daal
Pinch haldi
1 tsp mixture of dhanla and jeera powder
1 tsp mishri
Pinch of heeng
Sendha namak to taste
1 tsp ghee

Method

Sieve the two flours together, add salt and ghee and enough water in small quantities to bind. Knead to a smooth but firm dough.
Soak the daal for an hour, drain and grind to a fine paste.
Heat the ghee, add the heeng, salt, haldi and jeera-dhanla powder.
Sauté and add the daal and mishri. Move around the pan till dry.
Put oil/ghee to heat in a kadahl.
Break off a walnut sized portion of the dough, make a depression and place a tsp of the daal in it.
Bring the edges around to close, flatten the sides and roll with a very light hand taking care not to split the sides.
Check the oil for heat and then slide in the Radha Vallab.
Fry on both sides till very light golden.
Remove from oil and drain.
Serve immediately.

Poori waale Kashiphal



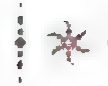
Tart, sweet and pleasantly bitter all at the same time. This one and bedmis are a match made in heaven! It tastes equally good with pooris, rotis and thapari.

Ingredients

½ kg deep orange kashiphal
2 tbsp sarson ka tel
1 tsp methre
¼ tsp heeng
1 tsp dhanla powder
¼ tsp haldi
2 tsp amchur powder
1 tsp sendha namak
2 tsp crushed mishri
1 tbsp adrak juliennes
Handful of finely chopped hara dhanla leaves and stems

Method

Wash and peel half the kashiphal and cut into small pieces.
Chop the remaining kashiphal with the skin.
Moisten the masala powders (except amchur) and heeng in 2 tsps of water.
Heat the mustard oil to smoking then turn off gas. When cooled re-ignite and throw in the methre.
When it splutters and browns add the ginger and the dissolved masalas.
Now topple in all the kashiphal and mix thoroughly till oiled and spiced.
Add the coriander stems.
Add a splash of water, cover tightly and lower gas to minimum.
Cook till soft adding a few more splashes of water if the kashiphal threatens to stick to the pan.
The peeled pieces will by now be ready to mash while the unpeeled ones will show resistance. You have the kashiphal where you want it.
Sprinkle in the amchur and mishri and mix throughly.
Now add the coriander leaves and serve.



Poori/Kachori waale aloo

Shankar Halwai in Haridwar serves the best aloo ki subzi we have ever eaten.

Ingredients

5-6 medium sized potatoes
3 tbsp ghee
1 inch piece adrak julienned
1 tsp jeera
¼ tsp methre
½ tsp heeng

¼ tsp haldi
½ tsp dhania powder
½ tsp amchur
½ tsp garam masala powder
2 tbsp thick dahi
Handful of chopped hara dhania
Namak to taste



Method

Scrub the potatoes well and boil till just done.

Mash into medium sized pieces.

Heat the ghee and add jeera and methre.

When they splutter add heeng and adrak and sauté.

Add the potatoes, dhania, haldi and sauté well till aloo sticks to the pan.

Pour in about 2 glasses of water and bring to the boil.

Lower the flame, cover and simmer at least 20 minutes.

Now add the amchur, garam masala and namak.

Whip the dahi and add.

Simmer for 2 minutes.

Garnish with hara dhania and serve with pooris, bedmi, radha vallab or kachori.



Potatoes are made in a tongue-tickling variety of ways. This is a dry, spicy and very aromatic variation that goes really well with kachoris as well as different kinds of rotis. In the Braj region aloos are often offered even though they are completely avoided in Jagannath temple where mitti aloo is used.



Sookhe aloo ki subzi

The trick lies in keeping the skin on.



Ingredients

½ kg aloo

1 tbsp jeera

Good pinch heeng

1 tsp freshly roasted and ground kali mirch

Namak to taste

1 tsp garam masala powder

2 tsp dhania powder

1 tsp amchur powder

½ tsp mishri

Small bunch hara dhania finely chopped

Method

Wash and scrub aloos well.

Cut into smallish pieces.

Heat ghee and toss in rai, jeera, heeng and kali mirch.

When they splutter topple in the potatoes.

Give a good stir around and cover tightly after lowering flame.

Check to ensure that the aloos don't stick to the bottom of the pan.

When almost tender, sprinkle over the rest of the spices and mix well.

Cover again and cook till very tender.

Remove from heat and sprinkle the fresh hara dhania.



Kachori

It's no wonder Krishna loves these spicy treats. Served with the sour aloo ki subzi and methi chutney they transport you to gastronomical heaven!



Ingredients

(The quantities are for a large number because we promise you can't stop at one!)

750 gms maida

250 gms whole wheat flour

300 gms ghee

Sendha namak to taste

½ tsp heeng dissolved in a tbsp of warm water

½ tsp baking soda

Ghee to fry

For the filling

250 gms urad dhuli dal

4 tsp saunf coarsely ground

2 tsp sabut kali mirch coarsely powdered

Pinch baking soda

3 good pinches heeng

3 tsp dhania powder

2 tsp garam masala powder

2 tsp amchur

Pinch lavang powder

Sendha namak to taste

Method

For the filling:

Soak the daal for 1 hour. Drain well and grind coarsely.

Heat a tsp of ghee, add all the masalas and sauté.

Tip in the ground daal and fry till dry. Keep aside.

Mix the two attas and baking soda.

Heat the ghee and pour into the atta. Rub lightly with your fingers till well mixed.

Add salt and dissolved heeng.

Add small quantities of warm water mixing and kneading well till you have a soft and smooth dough. The test for the perfection of the dough is that it should be as smooth as your ear-lobe! Leave to rest for 1 hour.

Put ghee into a kadahi and heat.

Break off a small portion of the dough and roll into a thick puri. Smear a small quantity of ghee, sprinkle flour and place a tsp of the filling in the center. Bring the edges in and close tightly.

With a very gentle hand flatten the filled roundel.

Drop very gently into the hot ghee.

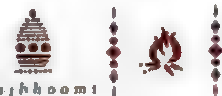
The temperature of the ghee is very important: it should be moderately hot and maintain the same temperature through the cooking process to ensure uniform browning.

Fry till a rich brown and crisp.

Drain well. Serve with aloo ki subzi and methi ki chutney.

Matar ki Kachori

Replace the daal filling with:



- ½ kg fresh Matar
- 2 tsp dhania powder
- 2 tsp jeera
- 3 good pinches heeng
- 1 tsp amchur
- 1/s tsp haldi
- Sendha namak to taste
- 2 tsp ghee

Method

Shell and wash matar.

Heat ghee and add hing and jeera.

Topple in the matar and add all the other masalas.

Stir well. Add about 1½ katoris of water and simmer till very tender.

Cool and mash coarsely.

Proceed to fill as above.

Aloo ki Kachori

Ingredients for stuffing



- 1 kg aloo
- Ghee to fry
- 250 gms besan
- Salt to taste
- ¼ tsp heeng
- 1 tsp amchur powder
- 1 ½ tsp dhania powder
- 1 tsp saunf powder
- 1 tbsp adrak bits fried
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp kaju broken into pieces
- 1 tbsp kishmish
- Bunch hara dhania chopped fine with stems

Method

Wash and peel the potatoes and boil in hot ghee on low flame till golden. Drain well, keep to cool a bit and mash.

In a little ghee sauté the besan till pink and emanating a lovely aroma.

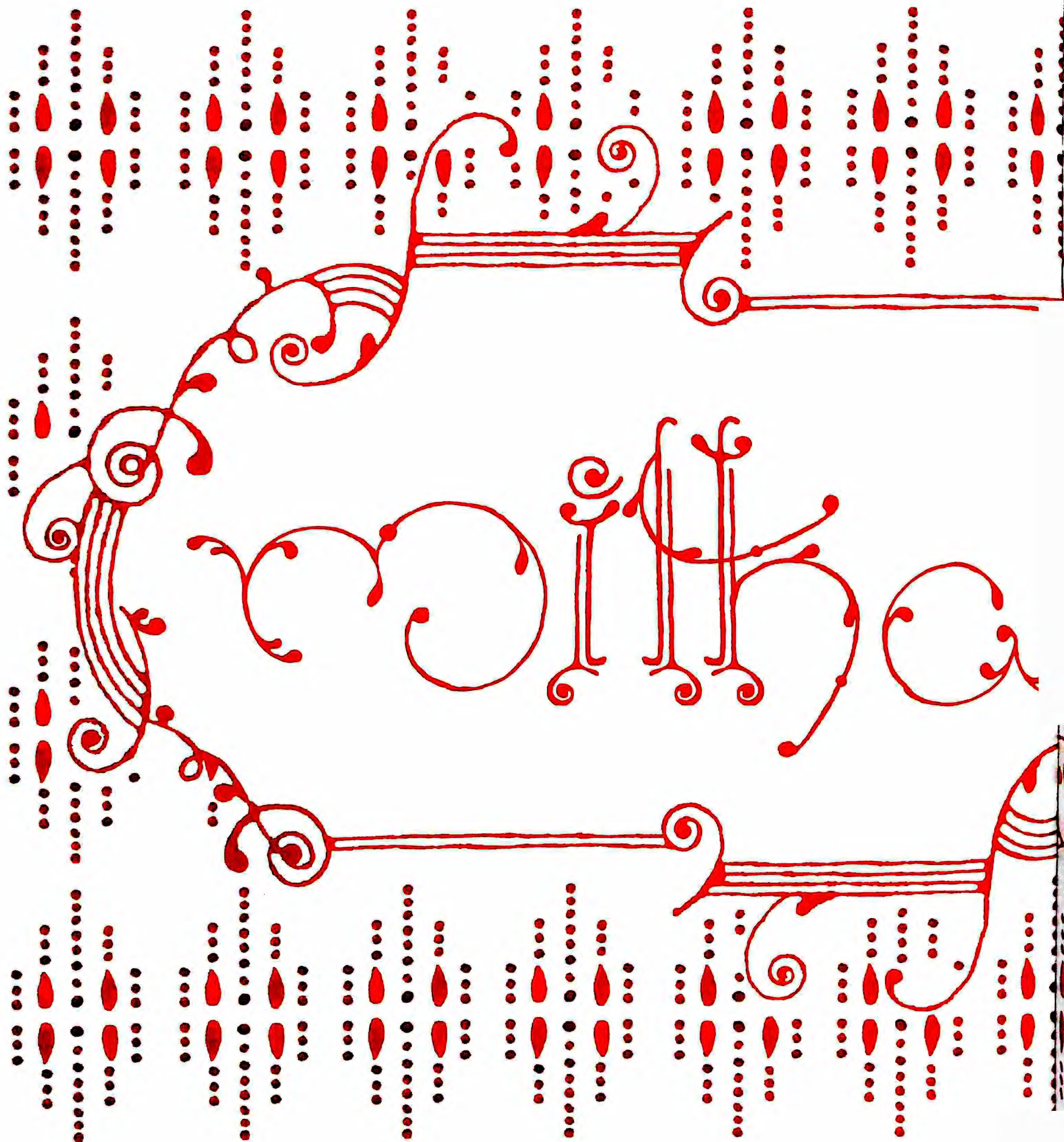
Add in the spices and dry fruits and keep sautéing.


Now add the mashed potatoes and keep mixing till dry. Take off the flame and add in finely chopped green dhania and keep aside. Fill as above.

Methi ki Chutney

Grind together 50 gms methre, 100 gms roasted zeera, ½ tsp heeng. Boil together 250 gms gur and 100 gms imli and extract pulp.

Mix masala into pulp and add sendha namak to taste.





Mithai in one form or the other is offered at every temple at almost every Bhog. As a result, there is no limit to the toothsome variety that Indians can choose from. Our Gods are certainly endowed with a sweet tooth and exquisite taste. Many of these sweets are a part of one or the other bhog prahar while some are for special occasions. Some temples prefer milk based preparations while others use fruits, cereals and even vegetables.

Suhaag Sonth

Such is its ability to warm that one is advised only a small piece of this exquisitely flavoured sweet and pregnant women are not to partake of it. There couldn't be a sweeter way to ward off the cold.

Ingredients

1 kg sugar
500 gms khoya
100 gms badam
100 gms pista
50 gms mixture of jaiphal, javitri and lavang
200 gms sonth (dry ginger)
10 gms pippali (Indian long pepper)
3 gms amber
3 gms kasturi
2 gms baras
5 gms kesar
5 gms choti elaichi
½ kg ghee

Method

Grind the jaiphal, javitri and lavang to a fine powder.
Grind badam and pista to a powder.
Soak kesar in a tbsp of milk.
Dry roast khoya in a heavy bottomed kadahi.
Make a 3-taar chashni with the sugar.
Take off the flame and add khoya. Mix well.
Add powdered nuts and keep mixing till dry.
Add all the other spices except kesar, kasturi and amber.
Keep mixing.
Heat the ghee and add kasturi and amber and stir till dissolved.
Pour into the khoya mixture and mix well.
Spread onto a 1 inch high thali and carefully place gold varq on top.
Leave to set.
Cut into small diamond shaped pieces to serve.





Kamrakh ka Bilsaru

Known as star fruit, kamrakh is a visual delight and its tartness dances on the palate. The high content of vitamin C is a preventive measure during winters when we are prone to coughs and colds. This is the perfect delicious way to keep colds at bay.





Ingredients

250 gms kamrakh

1 kg sugar and water to make a strong chasni

½ tsp kesar strands

½ tsp finely powdered elaichi



Method

Peel skin and slit the kamrakh.

(You will not be able to resist the mouth-watering sour aroma so lightly salt a piece and pop into your mouth before you continue).

Make a strong powdery chashni and add elaichi and kesar.

Quickly add kamrakh and stir to coat lightly.

Allow to set.

This can be enjoyed over the next 15 days.

Mohanthal

It's a richer version of besan ki barfi. At temples chunky pieces are offered and then distributed piled up on tokris (cane baskets).





Ingredients

1 kg besan
750 gms ghee
2 kg sugar
300 gms hot milk
250 gms khoya
10-12 pods choti elaichi powdered
1 tsp jaiphal-javitri powder
2 tbsp thinly sliced badam and pista

Method

Grease a thali with ghee and keep aside.
Mix 250 gms ghee and 200 ml milk into the besan and rub. It will be a dry mixture.
Heat the remaining ghee in a kadahi and add this mixture. Stir continuously till it turns deep pink and fragrant.
Now add the remaining milk and keep mixing till it gets absorbed.
Take off the flame.
Separately fry the khoya till it begins to change colour and then add to the besan.
Make a 2 taar chashni with sugar and water and pour into the besan-khoya mixture.
Reheat and stir till it is all well mixed and bubbly.
Add elaichi powder and mix.
Put into the greased thali and sprinkle the nuts.
Leave to set and cut into squares to serve.

Dil Khush

This seemed to us a 'set' version of daal ka halwa which is a winter favourite.
It certainly gladdens the heart.

Ingredients

250 gms moong dhuli daal
325 gms sugar
325 gms ghee
Water to make chashni
5-6 badams soaked, peeled and thinly sliced
6-7 pistas thinly sliced
1 tbsp khus khus lightly browned (in summer)

Method

Soak the daal for an hour and then grind to a fine paste using as little water as possible.
Heat ghee and roast the daal in the ghee till it leaves the sides. This is a long process to be done on medium to low flame.
Make a chashni with the sugar and water. For winter keep it 2 taar and for summer 1 taar.
Mix the chashni into the roasted daal.
Grease a thali and pour the mixture into it.
If making in winter sprinkle the dry fruits on top and in summer sprinkle the khus-khus.
Leave to set and then cut into barfi shapes to serve.



Malai Rabri

In an unusual departure, buffalo milk is used instead of cow milk, to make rabri in Puri perhaps because of its higher fat content. In Braj bhoomi however cow milk is favoured.

Ingredients

1 litre milk - cow or buffalo as per your preference
100 gms mishri (optional)

Method

Put the milk into a kadahi and place over low to medium flame and allow it to simmer till it reduces, scraping the sides frequently.

Ensure that the milk only gently simmers and does not reach a rolling boil or the process of reduction will be affected.

Once reduced and thick remove from the flame and add the mishri (if using) stirring till it dissolves. Since there is a natural sweetness to the milk the addition of mishri is often avoided.

Kheer Vada

Ingredients

1 katori rice flour
2 katoris milk
Ghee for deep frying
1 katori sugar

Method

Mix rice flour with milk and put it into a pan.

Heat this mixture on a low flame stirring continuously till it thickens.

Cool a little. Heat ghee and make small vadas with the mixture and drop into the hot ghee.

Fry on low to medium flame till golden brown.

Make a 2-taar chashni and soak the fried vadas in it.

Leave for a few minutes for the syrup to get absorbed and then drain well.

Amritakeli

Ingredients

100 gms maida
Pinch baking powder
1 litre milk
½ katori sugar
1 tbsp ghee
Pinch baras
2 heaped tbsp finely chopped
badam, pista and kishmish
A deghchi of boiling water

Method

Keep the milk on a moderate to low flame to boil and allow to simmer gently till slightly thickened.

Heat the ghee and fry the nuts till golden and put into the thickened milk with the baras and sugar and keep covered and warm.

Make a medium batter with the maida and baking powder and pour into the boiling water through a poni so that boondi like roundels are formed.



When they float they are cooked.

Remove from the water and allow to drain well.

Put the drained maida boondis into the warm milk and serve.

You could also cool and serve.

Narangi ki Barfi



The freshness and flavor of this delicately flavoured barfi is unsurpassed. The use of fresh fruit makes it unique and quite in tune with the basic tenets of Bhog. Oranges are high in vitamin C and the kesar-kasturi adds the warmth that winter demands.



Ingredients

10 Oranges
1 katori sugar
¼ katori ghee
Few strands of kesar
A Scant pinch of kasturi
2 sheets chandi ka varq
(edible silver sheet)

Method

Peel the oranges and remove the white segment covering as well so that you have only the segments.
Heat ghee and add the peeled orange segments.
Sauté on medium to high flame till completely dry. It is important that the fruit mix be juice-free.
Make a powdery chasni. Add the kesar strands.
Mix into the fruit. This step must be done really fast as the sugar can begin to caramelize if you wait too long.
Grease a deep dish and pour the mixture into the dish.
Sprinkle the kasturi and even out the mixture.
Delicately place chandi ka varq on the surface.
Leave to set.
Cut into diamonds to serve.

Chhena Poda



Sweet shops all over Puri but especially around the Jagannath temple display a bronze thali with a leafy covering. Under the fresh green leaf lies the soft, spongy, juicy milk-based cheese cake with a caramel topping. 'Called 'chhena poda' this is known to be Jagannathji's favourite indulgence.

Ingredients

5 katoris chhena (soft paneer)

300 gms sugar/ mishri

2-3 tbsp sooji

3-4 choti elaichi crushed

6-7 cashewnuts lightly fried in ghee and broken into bits

1 tbsp of sugar/mishri to sprinkle over the top

Method

Drain the chhena well.

Mix in the sooji and beat well till light and fluffy.

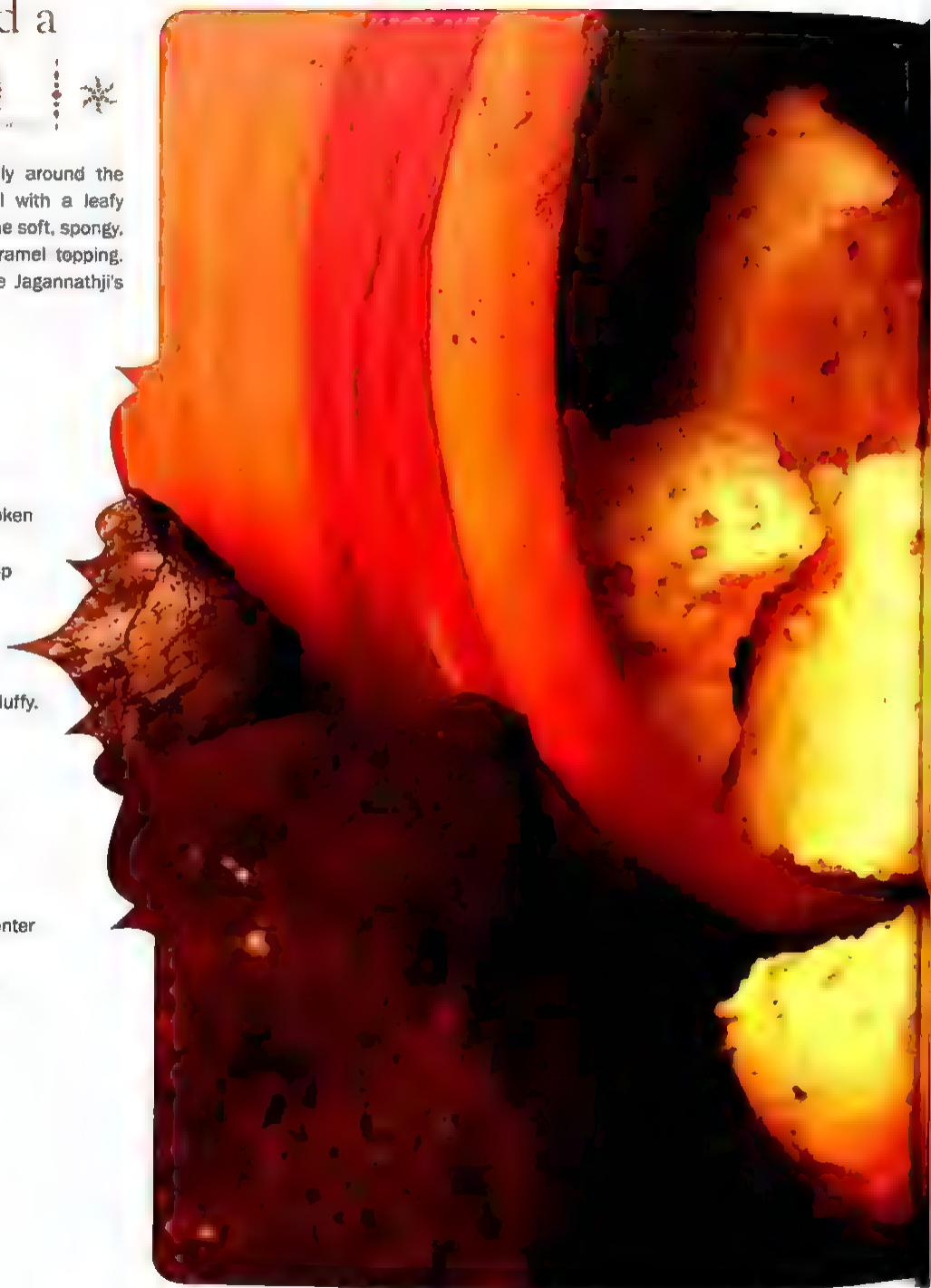
Mix in all the other ingredients reserving 2 tbsps of sugar/mishri and pour into a greased dish.

Sprinkle the remaining sugar/mishri over the top.

Bake in a pre-heated oven for about 40 minutes at 200°F.

The top should be golden brown and the center soft and wobbly.

Cover and cool before cutting and serving.





Radhakrishna Rasgulla



Called so because there are two ways of eating this soft juicy delight.

Radha, in her very lady-like way breaks off a bite sized piece and delicately puts it into her mouth. Krishna flamboyantly puts the entire rasagulla into his mouth and squeezes it. The juicy squirt is like a sweet kiss.

The Bengali rasgulla is renowned for its 'sponginess' and the whiter it is the more perfect it is supposed to be. In Puri however we discovered another version of this ambrosial treat that was served to us accompanied by a really sweet story. The Puri, rasgulla is slightly pink in colour and of a denser texture but delightfully smooth and soft.



The story goes that Jagannathji along with Balaramji and Subhadaraji went to visit his mashima (mother's sister), for a few day. Mahalakshmi ji his wife stayed back in Puri. The visit stretched into 9 days. (This is the period celebrated as the Rath Yatra today). When they finally returned home, Mahalakshmi ji was so annoyed at their long absence that she refused to open the palace gates. Subhadaraji pleaded with her saying that she had merely accompanied her brother and so should be forgiven and granted entry. Mahalakshmi ji conceded and opened the gates allowing only her to enter. Then Balaram used the same argument. Mahalakshmi ji could not argue so she allowed him to come in as well but insisted that Jagannathji would not be allowed. He seemed to have resigned himself to her whim and shrugging casually declared that in that case he would not be able to offer her the delectable new dish he had brought back specially for her.

Mahalakshmi ji tried to resist and ignore him but her curiosity (and taste buds) got the better of her and she cajoled him to let her taste it. Jagannathji would not let the opportunity slip by ...and he negotiated to be allowed into the palace first!

The new sweet he finally treated Mahalakshmi ji to was the Rasgulla. Ever since then, on the last (9th) day of the Rath Yatra, Rasgullas are distributed to all the devotees.



Ingredients

4 litres cow milk
Vinegar/ curd or lime juice to split the milk
20 gms maida
40 gms sooji
4 kgs sugar
3 litres water

Method

Boil the milk and add the souring agent.
Leave to drain really well.
Make a 2-taar chashni with the sugar and water.
Knead the chhena till soft and add the sooji and maida.
Cover and leave for about 15 minutes.
Make walnut sized balls of the chhena mixture and put into the hot chashni.
Leave in for 15-20 minutes by which time the balls will begin to float.
At this point begin to add hot water little by little into the chasni so that the rasgullas start sinking. This is an indication that the rasgullas are ready.
Cool to room temperature before serving.

Papuri

A very different papad from the roasted or fried ones we are familiar with. These are soft and creamy.

Ingredients

4-5 litres milk

Special implement required- two thin sticks of bamboo

Pattal (dry leaf plate) to keep the papuri

2 tbsp crushed Mishri and mixed nuts to sprinkle

Method

Keep the milk to boil on a medium flame.

As the cream rises and thickens pick it up from two sides of the kadahi with the help of the bamboo sticks and place on the pattal.

Keep repeating the process till all the malai has been collected.

Sprinkle the mishri-nuts mixture.



Tavapuri

Another exquisite winter treat.

Ingredients

250 gms very finely ground atta

250 gms ghee

125 gms chana daal

3-4 pods crushed choti elaichi

2 tsp finely chopped badam, pista and chironji

Pinch kasturi

Few strands kesar

200 gms sugar

Water to make 2-taar chashni

Milk to soak the daal

Method

Soak the daal in milk overnight.

Drain, dry well and grind to a coarse paste.

Make 2-taar chashni and keep aside.

Heat 1 tsp of ghee and roast the daal paste till dry.

Add nuts, kesar, kasturi and elaichi and keep aside.

Knead a dough with the atta and 1 tbsp ghee.

Put the remaining ghee in a kadahi and heat.

Break off a small ball of the dough, make a depression, smear with a little ghee, sprinkle a little atta and put in a small amount of the daal mixture.

Close the edges and gently roll out to a kachori size.

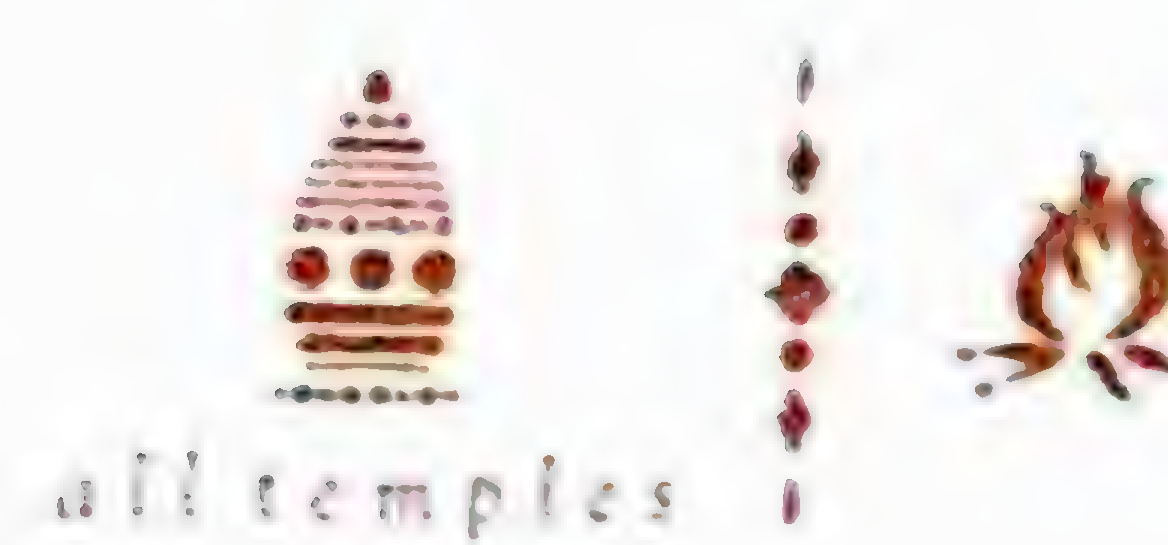
Drop into the hot ghee and fry on low flame till golden and crisp.

Drain and soak in the chashni.

Remove and drain till a thin coating remains and serve.



Malpua



Succulent, juicy and irresistible it is not surprising that it is one of the favourite special offerings at many temples.

Ingredients

200 gms atta
100 gms maida
50 gms suji
100 gms khoya
¼ tsp baking powder
2 tsp crushed saunf
1 tsp choti elaichi powder
Ghee to fry
2 katori sugar
Water to make a 2-taar chashni (about 1½ katoris)
6-7 strands kesar

Method

Mix the atta, maida, sooji and baking powder.
Grate the khoya in and make a batter of dropping consistency.
Beat well, add saunf and elaichi and keep aside for 15 minutes.
Make the chashni, add kesar and keep warm.
Heat ghee and pour in a ladle full of the batter allowing it to spread by spooning the ghee over it.
When the edges begin to brown turn it over and fry till golden brown.
Remove, drain and soak in the chashni.

Chauri Naidha

A recipe narrated to us by Madhuji renowned for his wide knowledge of traditional recipes.

Ingredients

1 kg urad dhuli daal
200 gms rice
Ghee to fry
½ kg gur (jaggery)
100 gms atta
Few tsp khand



Method

Grind the daal and rice together, preferably on a stone grinder and add water to make a thick batter of dropping consistency.
Heat ghee, make little vadas and fry till light gold in colour.
Cut the vadas into pieces and re-fry till crisp and dry.
Leave to drain and then crumble them.
Mix the ghee and gur together and heat gently along with the atta.
Now add the crumbed vadas and mix well. Sprinkle the khand over and serve warm.



Maha Supakar, Madhuji.

Jalebi

A tongue in cheek saying in Hindi goes 'as straight as a jalebi'! Far from straight, convoluted morsels of dripping, crunchy heaven is more or less an apt description.

Ingredients

- 250 gms maida
- A pinch of baking soda
- 2 katoris sugar
- 1 katori water
- 7-8 strands kesar
- A pinch of yellow food colour
- Ghee to fry



Method

Make a medium batter with maida, baking soda and water.

Make chashni with sugar, water, yellow colour and kesar.

Heat ghee.

Take a thick cloth of about 10 inches square and cut a tiny hole in the center.

Fold up the edges of the cloth and pour the batter onto the center. Quickly tighten around the middle and start making concentric circles with the batter flowing out of the hole into the hot ghee. The thinner and smaller the better.

Fry till golden brown and crisp.

Remove and soak in the sugar syrup for a few minutes.

Remove and leave to drain.

Serve hot with rabri (optional) or dunked in hot milk or on its own.

During periods of fasting, aloo ki jalebi is offered.

Instead of maida use 2 potatoes boiled and smoothly mashed, 100 gms grated paneer and arrowroot (non cereal thickening agent) to bind into a thick batter.

Proceed as above.



Basundi

This is as popular in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra as rabri is in U.P. and Punjab. A thicker version of rabri with added flavor and texture.

Ingredients

1 litre milk
1 tbsp crushed mishri
2-3 pods choti elaichi crushed
1 tsp chironji (charoli)
A few strands of kesar

Method

Put the milk to simmer till it reduces to a thick and gooey softness. Add all the other ingredients and mix well. Cool before serving.

Chhenataaria

Ingredients

Chhena made from 1 litre milk
1-2 tbsp maida
Pinch baking soda
Ghee to fry
1 katori sugar
Water to make a medium chashni

Method

Drain the chhena well and knead lightly to make a smooth and light paste. Mix in the maida and baking soda. Make chashni and keep warm. Heat ghee. Take a small blob of the mixture on a wet palm, flatten slightly and with your index finger make a hole in the center of the roundel. Reshape to round the sides and carefully slide into the hot ghee. Repeat till kadahi is full. Fry till golden, then drain well and dunk into the warm chashni. Remove and drain till only a soft coating is left. For Rasavali soak the chhena vadas in a thin rabri.

Arnarasawali

Juicy, fragrant and layered like a biryani

Ingredients

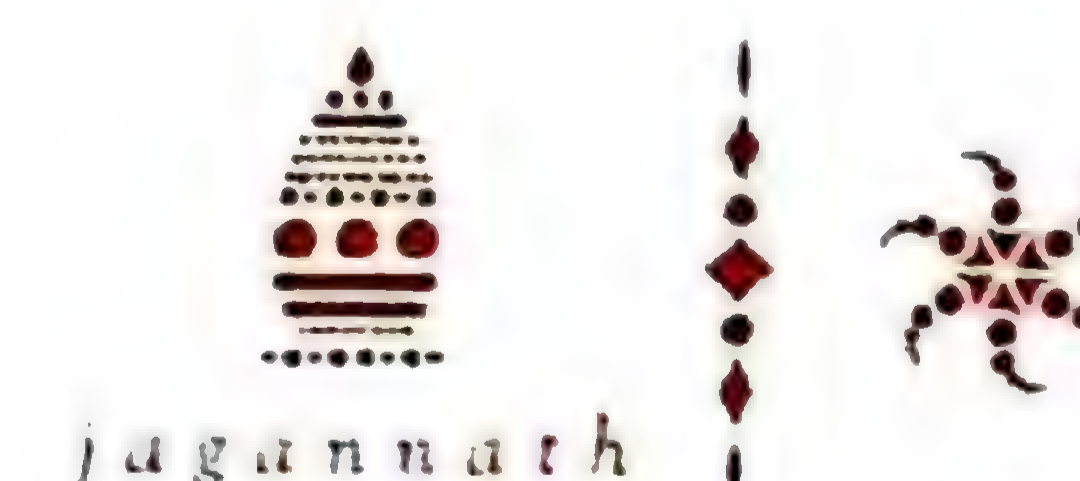
100 gms rice (govind bhog or good quality fragrant basmati)
300 gms khoya
300 gms malai (ideally collect the top of the milk but thick cream can be substituted)
150 gms yellow mishri crushed but not powdered
100 gms mixed nuts and kishmish
25 gms choti elaichi powder
½ katori ghee

Method

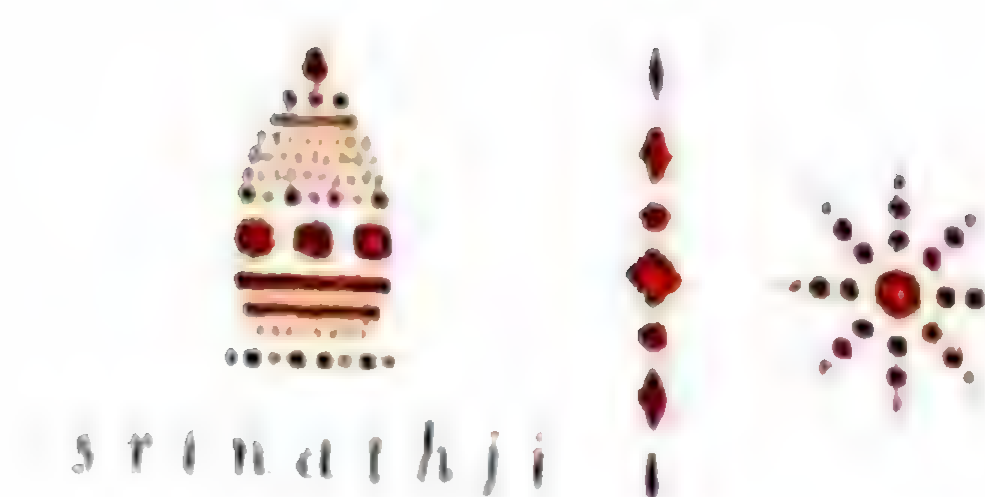
Boil and drain the rice really well. It must be completely moisture-free. Grate the khoya and mix in mishri and elaichi powder. Grease a shallow dish with ghee and put in a layer of the rice then put a layer of khoya, dryfruits, ghee and malai. Repeat the layers till all the ingredients are used up reserving a little bit of the dry fruit mixture to sprinkle on top as garnish. Leave to set and then cut into pieces to serve.



A priest at Govindevi at Manipur



Ras ki Pakori



Unusual and exceptionally moreish this is an example of seasonal kadahi ki seva.

Ingredients

3 soft, ripe dussehri/ kesar kairi mangoes
Besan as required- about a katori and a half
½ tsp baking soda
1 tsp jeera
Pinch heeng
6-7 sabut kali mirch halved

3 tbsp ghee
Ghee to fry
1 katori sugar
½ katori water to make chashni
Boora for dusting



Method

Peel and pulp the mangoes.

Pass through a sieve or white muslin cloth.

Add the baking soda, jeera, heeng and pepper corns and mix.

Add the besan a little at a time till you have a dropping consistency batter.

Now pour in 3 tbsp ghee and beat very well till the batter is light and fluffy.

Heat the ghee and drop in little balls of the batter, frying till a lovely golden and crisp.

Make a thin coatable chashni with the sugar and water and briefly dunk the golden balls into the chashni till just coated.

Drain well.

To serve, place a layer of the ras ki pakoris on a tray and dust with boora.

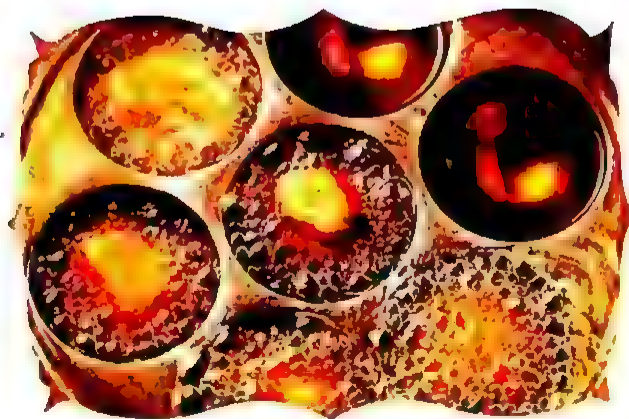
Now place another layer on top and dust again. Repeat till all the pakoris are arranged.

Serve immediately.



A p a m

When the priest handed over the receipt for apam at Guruvayoor temple we expected the dosa like pancakes. Much to our surprise we were handed over these lovely pakuris. Not that we complained after tasting them. For this very special dish you will need a special cooking device - the appakara - a flat pan with depressions in it. Dropping the batter into these depressions filled with ghee gives the apams their unique shape.





Ingredients

2 katoris chawal ka atta (rice flour)

¼ katori gur (jaggery)

2-3 ripe bananas depending on the size

Ghee to fry

Method

Melt the gur on a low flame.

Boil, peel and mash the bananas.

Mix the atta, banana and gur together and beat well.

Add a little water if necessary. You need a dropping consistency batter.

Heat ghee in the appakara and drop roundels into the depressions.

Fry till golden brown on both sides.

Remove and drain well.

Ladoo is the generic word for small ball and derived from the Sanskrit word 'laddhuka'.



Annapurna Devi Mandir, Varanasi

Annapura Besan Ladoo



At the Annapurna mandir we were given these ladoos as Prasad. It was impossible to believe that they were 6 months old. They tasted as if they were freshly made! Apparently the quality and ratio of the ghee is responsible for their amazing freshness. Annakoot which comes after Diwali, is the main festival at this temple celebrated with great pomp and devotion.

Ingredients

- 1 kg coarse besan
- 1 kg ghee
- 1 kg boora (a special kind of coarsely powdered sugar popular in india) it can also be made at home if you don't find it in the market
- 100 gms badam, split
- 100 gms kishmish
- 8-10 badi elaichi, peeled and the seeds crushed

Method

- Heat the ghee and slide in the besan.
- Keep flame moderate to low and stir continuously till the besan darkens to a deep golden, the ghee separates and there is an enticing aroma wafting around.
- Now add the badam and mix for a few minutes more.
- Pour in the boora and remove from heat.
- When still warm add the kishmish and crushed elaichi dana.
- Cover and leave to cool.
- Make ladoos by smearing your palms with ghee and taking a small portion and rolling it between your palms.
- Place on a flat plate in a pile to serve.

Maida Ladoo

Pristine white and light

Ingredients

- 1 kg maida
- 1 kg boora
- 1 kg ghee

Method

- Heat ghee and roast maida till fragrant but not brown
- Add boora, mix and remove from heat.
- Cool and shape into ladoos.

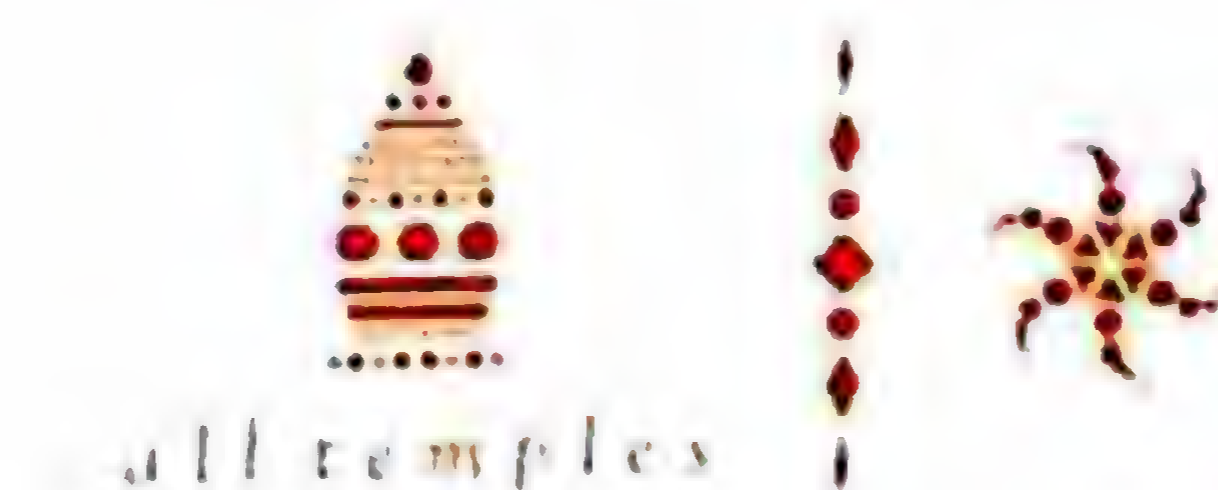


Boondi ke Ladoo

Festivities and special occasions in India begin with the offering of boondi ke ladoo to one's presiding deity. These bright orange juicy treats are rich yet seemingly light and never fail to bring a smile to one's face because of their association with celebrations!

Ingredients

- 1 katori besan made from chane ki dal
- 2 katoris sugar
- 1 katori water
- 1 tbsp chawal ka atta (rice flour)
- A few strands of kesar soaked in a tsp of milk
- A pinch of yellow colour
- 2 pods crushed choti elaichi
- ½ katori milk to make a batter
- A pinch baking powder
- Ghee to fry
- 2 tbsp chopped badams and pista
- 1 tsp melon seeds



Method

- Mix besan, chawal ka atta and baking powder and pour in enough milk to make a thick batter of pouring consistency. Add coloring and mix.
- Make a 1-taar chashni with the sugar and water and add elachi and kesar to it.
- Heat ghee and pour the batter through a fine metal sieve into the hot ghee as little droplets. Fry till pale gold in colour and drain well.
- Add the fried droplets to the chashni and leave to absorb the sweet juice.
- Mix in the nuts and seeds. Shape into ladoos.
- Leave to set for a few hours.

Til ke Ladoo

A very popular offering during winter because of the warming properties of til. These ladoos are also offered to the sacred fire on Lohri celebrations as revelers go around the fire singing and dancing and bidding winter a fond farewell.

Ingredients

250 gms grated khoya
100 gms crushed mishri
100 gms til (sesame seeds)
4 pods crushed choti elaichi
1 tbsp ghee
2 tbsp boora

Method

Dry roast the til on a tawa, keep half aside and coarsely grind the other half and keep aside.

Heat ghee in a kadahi and add grated khoya.

Stir on medium flame till it turns pink.

Now add the ground til, mishri and elaichi and stir till the mishri dissolves.

Mix the boora and remaining til and keep in a flat dish.

When cool enough to handle make ladoos with the khoya mixture and roll in the til-boora mixture.



Seb ke ladoo (Patiya)

Ingredients

250 gms maida
50 gms ghee
500 gms sugar
Water for chashni
Pinch baras
2 tbsp gulab jal and a few pattis (petals) of chaiti gulab in summer
A generous pinch of jaiphal-javitri powder in winter
Ghee to fry

Method

Mix the ghee into the maida and bind into a dough. Leave covered for an hour.

Roll out into ¼" thickness and cut into any shape you like.

Heat ghee and fry the shapes on low flame till crisp.

Cool and grind coarsely.

Make a 2-taar chashni with the sugar and water and while still hot, soak the coarsely ground fried atta.

Leave covered for 12 hours, after which it will be a soft and moist mass.

Add baras and the aromatic according to the season.

Mix well and shape into ladoos.

Rava Nariyal Ladoo



Ingredients

2 katoris rava (sooji)
1katori grated fresh nariyal
1 ½ katoris sugar
1 tsp choti elaichi powder
½ katori ghee

Method

Fry rava with ghee until it changes colour.

Add grated nariyal.

Add elachi powder and take off the fire.

Make a chashni of 1 string consistency with 1 katori sugar and add this syrup to the rava mixture. Keep it for an hour.

Make another chashni with the remaining sugar of 2 string consistency and add it into the rava mixture.

Make small ladoo with this rava mixture and keep to cool.

If you want you can add 1 cup of milk cream into the rava mixture to make Malai Rava Ladoo.



Parizat



Ingredients

1 katori whole wheat atta finely ground
1 katori dahi
1 tsp saunf, coarsely crushed
Ghee to fry
1 katori sugar
Water to make chashni of coating consistency
 $\frac{1}{2}$ katori boora

Method

Soak the atta in the dahi and leave overnight, then beat well.
Mix in the saunf.
Make chashni and keep warm.
Heat ghee and drop in roundels of the atta-dahi mixture.
Fry on low heat till golden brown and then remove and drain well.
Soak in the chashni and remove.
When drained, sprinkle with the boora.



Goonja



Known as gujiyas as well, a number of variants each more delicious than the other are made and offered depending on the festival. These are most popular during Holi.

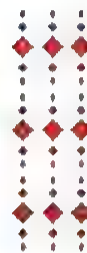
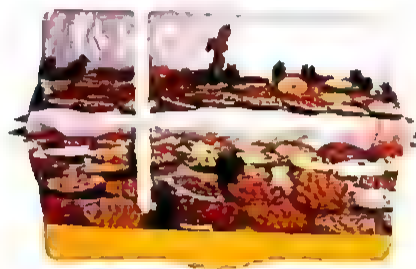
Ingredients

For the filling

200 gms atta
200 gms boora
2 tsp dry grated nariyal
2-3 sabut kalimirsch
2 tsp kishmish
2 tsp chironji
½ tsp choti elaichi powder
Pinch baras
1 tbsp ghee + 2 tbsp ghee

For the wrapping

250 gms maida
50 gms ghee
1 katori sugar
Water to make chashni
Ghee to fry



108 mithais served by the authors at Holi Utsav 2009 at Garden of Five Senses, New Delhi

Method

Heat the 50 gms of ghee for the wrapper gently and pour into the maida. Bind into a tough dough by adding water little by little. Cover with a moist cloth and keep aside.

Heat the 1 tbsp of ghee and add the atta, moving around on low flame till pink and fragrant.

Cool and mix in boora.

Add kalimirsch, grated nariyal, kishmish, elaichi powder, baras and chironji.

Add 2 tbsp melted ghee.

Break off a roundel of the kneaded dough and roll out into a thin puri.

Place a generous amount of the filling in the center and fold over to form a crescent shape.

Crimp the edges and press down to seal firmly.

Heat ghee and gently fry on low flame till crisp and golden.

Make a strong chashni with the sugar and water and dunk the fried golden gujiyas into it.

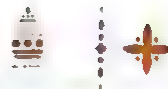
Leave for a few minutes and then remove and leave to drain.

Variations

Instead of atta for the filling use khoya, omit the nariyal and replace boora with desi shakkar.

Urad daal, soaked, coarsely ground and roasted in ghee also makes a delicious filling.

Gulike Gujiya



Ingredients

For the filling

- 10 puris made with atta
- 50 gms khoya
- 100 gms gur/shakkar
- 2-3 crushed choti elaichi
- 2 tbsp chopped mixed dry fruits

For the wrapper

- 100 gms maida
- Ghee for frying plus 3 tsp for dough
- 2 katoris sugar
- Water for chashni

Method

Leave the puris to dry. You could do this by placing them in a warm oven or simply leaving under a fan. Grind them to a coarse powder and dry roast in a kadahi alongwith the dry fruits. Cool slightly then mix in the elaichi powder. Mix the 3 tsp ghee in the maida and make a stiff dough. Keep covered for about half an hour. Break off a small roundel and roll out thinly. Place a small quantity of the filling in the centre and fold into a crescent shape. Crimp the sides and seal by pressing down. Heat the ghee and fry the gujyas on low flame till golden brown. Leave to drain well. Make a strong chashni with the sugar and water. It should be of coating consistency. Drop the gujyas into the chashni and remove after a few minutes. Leave to drain ensuring that a thin coating of the chashni remains.



Madhur Jaan

Ingredients

- 100 gms besan
- 250 gms ghee
- 2 katoris sugar
- Water to make a strong chashni
- 1 litre milk
- 3-4 pods crushed choti elaichi
- 5-6 pistas, finely minced to garnish



Method

Make a strong chashni with the sugar and water and keep aside. Make a medium batter with the besan and water and add a small quantity of ghee to it. Heat the remaining ghee in a flat pan and sieve the batter through a ponl into the ghee. The pakoris should not drown in the ghee. When bubbles appear on the edges sprinkle a little water over the ghee so that there is a crackle and sizzle. Flip over the little pakoris which would have acquired an hourglass figure by now and fry till golden. Dunk into the chashni till they absorb some of the juicy sweetness and then remove. Heat the milk gently and keep simmering over a low flame till slightly thickened. Add the soaked pakoris into the milk and boil a few minutes more. Leave covered to cool before serving garnished with the pistas.

Khaja



The by-lanes around the Jagannath temple in Puri are full of tiny shanties selling khaja in various shapes and sizes. Molten gold, glistening and crispy sweet these are delightful Prasad, regardless of the shape or size.

Ingredients

250 gms maida
4 tbsp maida
4 tbsp ghee
A few tbsp water
Ghee to fry
250 gms sugar
Water for chashni

Method

Knead a moderately hard dough with the 250 gms maida. Leave covered for 15 mins. Mix the next three ingredients to form a thick paste. Roll out the dough very very thin and really large. Spread the paste evenly and thinly over the entire rolled out dough.



Starting at one end begin to roll the dough as tight as possible till you have a long log. Now cut into pinwheels and with a very light hand on a rolling pin stretch them out gently. Heat the ghee and fry the flaky khajas on low flame. Drain when golden and crisp. Make a strong chashni with the sugar and water and soak the drained khajas very briefly. Remove and leave to drain and cool.

Jagannath Vallab



Ingredients

½ kg atta
½ kg sugar
150 gms ghee
1 litre water
3-4 choti elaichi pods crushed
1 tbsp finely sliced badam and pista

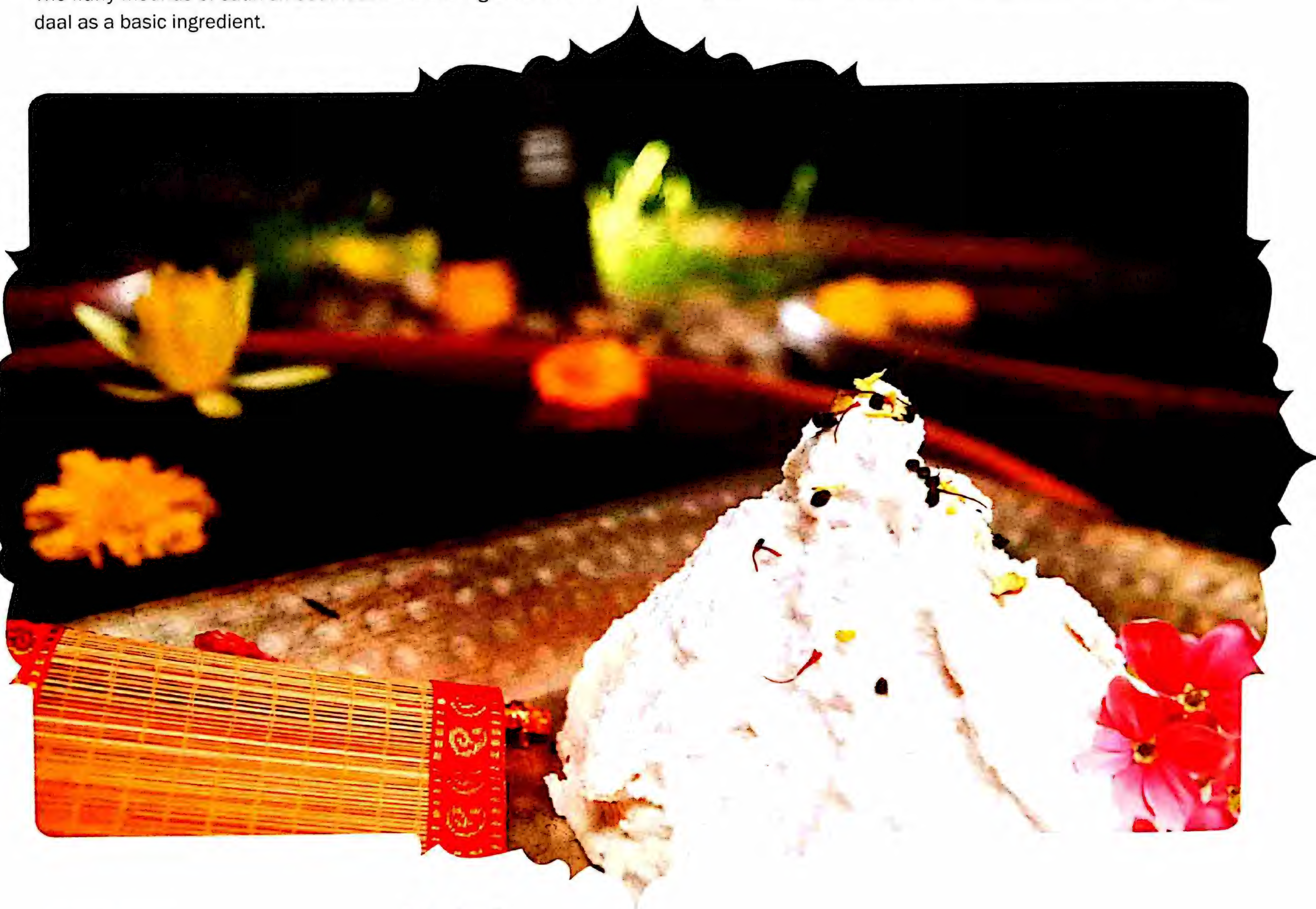
Method

Melt the ghee in a kadahi and add the atta. Roast on medium to slow flame till nut-brown and aromatic. Boil the water and pour in the sugar along with the elaichi pods. When the atta is well roasted turn the flame to low and pour in the sugar water slowly, stirring constantly so that no lumps are formed. Mix well till it leaves the sides of the kadahi and pour into a greased thall. Sprinkle the nuts over the top and leave to set. Cut into squares or diamond.

Magdal



The fluffy mounds of satin smoothness belie the ingredients of this surprising sweetmeat. The creamy texture would never point towards daal as a basic ingredient.



Ingredients

100 gms moong dhuli daal
100 gms urad dhuli daal
200 gms coarsely powdered mishri
5 gms maida
200 gms ghee
2-3 pods crushed choti elaichi
a pinch of kesar soaked in a tsp of milk

Method

Make a fine powder of the daals. This can be done in a mixie.
Heat 100 gms of the ghee, lower heat and add the powdered daal.
Keep stirring till almond coloured, taking care that the mixture doesn't become dry, in which case add some ghee bit by bit.
When done, remove from heat and cool. Add mishri and mix well.
Spread out, add elaichi and kesar and leave till it sets.
Now begin to beat the mixture, lightly at first and then more vigorously adding the remaining ghee as and when needed.
Magdal is ready when the mixture turns light cream in colour and has the texture of beaten butter.
To test for lightness, drop a ball into a katori of water. If it floats you've got it right.

Glossary

Samagri - Ingredients

Bhog - The prepared dish

Prasad - After offering to the deity

Taseer - Inherent quality of an ingredient that affects body temperature and is cooling or warming

Saathras - 7 Tastes. Sweet, sour, bitter, astringent, salty, pungent and metallic

Measurements

It has been a conscious decision to retain the language and measurements of the oral narrative of the temple cooks, to re-create as authentic an experience for the reader as possible. Many narrations included the favourite 'andaz' (approximately or according to your understanding and in relation to the other ingredients) which we have tried to convert into an accurate unit of measurement.

The conversions are as follows:

1 katori - 1¼ cups, 200 gms

Chutki - pinch

Cheenta - sprinkle

Most recipes serve 3-4 people. Mithais and namkeens are for larger groups as they can be stored.

Ingredients

Adrak - Ginger is a digestive root and has heating properties



Ajwain - Thymol seeds are digestive, aid in stomach ailments and have a heating taseer.

Ambakori ada - Mango flavoured ginger native to Puri.

Amber - Aromatic resin used in food in the Braj and Nathdwara region with a heating taseer.

Anar - Pomegranate is red, juicy and a mini-meal in itself. Lord Ganesha is also known as the Bijapuraphalasakta, the one fond of the many-seeded fruit.

Atta - Whole wheat flour. High fiber and very nutritious.

Badam - Almonds are a powerful anti-oxidant, packs in Vitamin E, hot taseer with skin and cool when soaked and peeled. Used in mithais and thandai.

Badi - Moong daal dumplings. To make, soak 250 gms moong dhull daal for 2 hours. Drain well and grind fine with as little water as possible. Add 1 tsp sendha namak, 1 tbsp jeera, 1 tsp coarsely crushed kali mirch, ½ tsp heeng 1 tsp red chilli powder, ½ tsp lavang-dalchini powder and mix well. Spread out a sheet in an open area in the sun and drop little dumplings on the sheet. Leave to dry for a few days till hard. Store and use as required.

Badi Elaichi - Black cardamom is a seed pod, found in the South Indian spice belt and has a pungent flavor and aroma. Controls nausea effectively.

Baingan - Brinjal/Aubergine comes in big purple, round / oblong / bulb-like shapes.

Baras - Refined form of camphor (peppermint). Very cool taseer.



Besan - Chick Pea flour used as the main source of carbohydrate and fiber in various Indian dishes and is used along with yogurt or rosewater to form a cool exfoliator for the skin!

Besuro masala - An aromatic mixture of Rai (mustard seeds), Heeng (asafoetida), Saunf (fennel), Jeera (Cumin) used in Jagannath temple, Puri.

Bhen - Lotus stem or kamal kakdi is the root of the stunning Lotus plant extracted from marshy lands, studded with holes and has a crunchy and stringy texture.

Black Rice - Native to Manipur with a chewy texture. High carbohydrate content.



Boora - Powdered sugar used in Indian sweets. Can be made by melting a katori of sugar with a few sprinkles of water till it becomes powdery white.

Chana daal - Yellow lentils are a good source of protein. Hot taseer.

Chashni - Sugar Syrup used popularly in Indian sweets to coat Jalebis, Gulab Jamuns and other sweet delicacies. 1- taar refers to 1 string, 2-taar to 2 string and so on. This indicates the 'strength' of the syrup, i.e. its thickness. For 1 taar use 1 katori sugar in $\frac{1}{2}$ katori water, 2 taar will need 1 katori in $\frac{1}{4}$ katori water and 3 taar in just a few tbsp of water.

Chena - Soft cottage cheese, prior to setting into paneer.

Chironji - Charoli is a type of nut native to Asia and used as a substitute to almonds. It is rich and nutritious in protein and oil content. Used in sweets and pulaos.

Choti Elaichi - Green cardamom, is a seed pod spice used in traditional medicine as an instant relief for any blockages in the throat and lungs. A warm distinct flavor, perfect to steep in tea, mithais and some savory dishes.



Cow ghee - Clarified butter made from cow milk. Bhog must be made in pure ghee unless otherwise specified.

Curry Patta - Can be seen growing in many Indian balconies this leaf is aromatic and spicy and is used in some of the most delicious breakfast dishes of India.

Dalchini - Cinnamon is a warm, sweet, aromatic bark known to be one of the oldest spices in the world and extensively used across all cultures in cooking. It is also known to be a medicinal stimulant and sensory enhancer.



Garam Masala - dry roast 2 tbsp jeera, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp kali mirch, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp lavang, 2" piece dalchini, $\frac{1}{4}$ jaiphal, $\frac{1}{2}$ javitri, 2 tsp shahjeera and 2 tej pattas. Grind to a fine powder and store in an air tight bottle.

Gulab Jal - Rose extract with water used for aromatic flavoring and a variety of medicinal uses apart from being a beautiful fragrance. Cool taseer.



Gulkand - Rose petal preserve – a delicious sweet cooling tonic also added in a paan, gulkand can be used to treat heart ailments like palpitation, arrhythmia, blood pressure etc.

Gur - Jaggery or molasses, the purest form of sugar. It facilitates the sustained release of sugar in the body, allowing the body to absorb sugar more effectively.

Hara Dhania - Fresh coriander, also used to make a lip – smacking condiment combined with green chilies, mint and lemon.

Hari Mirch - Green chilly comes in mild to very potent varieties. Very good decongestant.

Haibong - Very sour fruit native to Manipur, in look and texture resembles an apple.



Haldi - Turmeric used popularly in the powdered form has a high therapeutic value with almost every Indian household making their own combination of Haldi and milk to cure injuries and low immunity. Scientific research has proven that Haldi is extremely useful in the cure and prevention of Cancer. A delicious kacchi (fresh) haldi subzi can also be made and fresh haldi can be used instead of the dry form when in season.

Heeng - Asafoetida is the dried sap of stem/roots of plant and used as a gustatory enhancer. Very useful for digestive issues and some neurological complications. Transforms any dish magically. Heating taseer.

Jaiphal - Nutmeg obtained from a plant which also gives us Mace and a warming spice.

Javitri - Mace is an aromatic spice that is used as an anti-inflammatory and for digestive problems. The pretty lacy cover of jaiphal has a warming taseer.

Jeera - Cumin seeds have a warm peppery flavor and are high on iron and a useful digestive. Adds oomph to a dish.

Kala Namak - Black salt is the main component in the famous Indian Chaat Masala and is more pungent and acidic than its fairer counterpart.

Kali Mirch - Black Pepper is the dried fruit of the vine flowering plant over which wars have been fought.

Kashiphal - Yellow pumpkin is a mildly sweet squash, which gives body to a meal and is a versatile fruit when mixed with spices.

Kasturi - Musk - Also known as the scent of a man, Kasturi is used to cure various cardiac, mental and neurological disorders. It has a heating taseer.

Katahal - Jackfruit originating in the southwestern regions of India is the national fruit of Bangladesh and is also delicious when fried and eaten as chips.

Kela - Banana along with Katahal and Mango are considered to be the most auspicious fruits of Tamil Nadu and is an instant source of energy which helps lower blood pressure and boosts immunity. Both raw and ripe forms are useful.

Kesar - Saffron is one of the most expensive spices in the world and is used in a variety of measures and uses including for color, smell and of course therapeutic reasons. Heating taseer.

Khichdi Masala - Dry roast 1 piece jaiphal, 1 piece javitri, 15 pieces lavang, 3 nos. 2" pieces dalchini, 2 tsp shahjeera and 2 tej pattas. Grind to a fine powder and store in a tightly closed bottle.

Khoya - Thickened milk is one of the core bases of any festival food of India.

Khus Khus - Poppy seeds come from the plant which also gives us opium, these seeds add a rich creaminess to any dish.

Kishmish - Dried grapes or raisins are an instant source of energy and a popular garnishing in sweet dishes in India.

Komprek - Water dropwort has a sharp taste. Native to Manipur.



Lal mirch - Red chilly is considered an antiseptic.

Lavang - Cloves are dried fragrant buds of a flower and a popular addition to garam masala. Heating taseer and antiseptic properties makes it an important addition to food in monsoons and winter.

Loklei - Galangal and also called Pullei Maanbi in Manipur is similar to ginger but is sharper and is to be boiled before using to reduce its pungency.



Magaz - Combination of cucumber, pumpkin, melon and watermelon seeds usually ground into a paste and added to dishes for flavor and richness.

Maida - Refined flour.

Makhane - Fox Nut increases quality and quantity of semen and useful in impotence, helps to increase fertility in women. Used during fasts like Navratras and Ekadashi.

Mangal - Split yellow peas.

Maroi - Herb native to Manipur. Fresh green leaves with a distinct flavour.

Matar - Green Peas are high on starch and protein.

Methi - Fenugreek leaf - A bitter-sweet tasting aromatic leaf with a variety of therapeutic properties. Very heart friendly.

Methi Dana/Methre - Fenugreek seed is a bitter tasting spice good to lower cholesterol and blood pressure. Used in small quantities to flavor or add in baghaar.

Mishri - White sugar candy is popularly used as a throat irritant relief.



Mitti Aloo - Native to Puri and used instead of potatoes, they literally look like mud rocks.



Mohuro masala - A fragrant mix of Jeera, Kalimirch (black pepper), Dhania seeds (coriander) and Heeng popular at Jagannath temple, Puri.

Mooli - Radish is a root vegetable with high water content.

Moong chilka, daal - Mung beans split.

Moong Dhuli daal - Mung beans washed.

Moong sabut daal - Mung beans whole.

Moongphali - Peanuts have a high oil and protein content, and is one of the most popular street snacks of India.

Munakka - Dried Sultanas, native to the middle-eastern and central Asian region, they are sweet tasting, powerful digestives and help in cooling the body down.

Nungmangkha leaves - Bitter palm sized leaf native to Manipur.

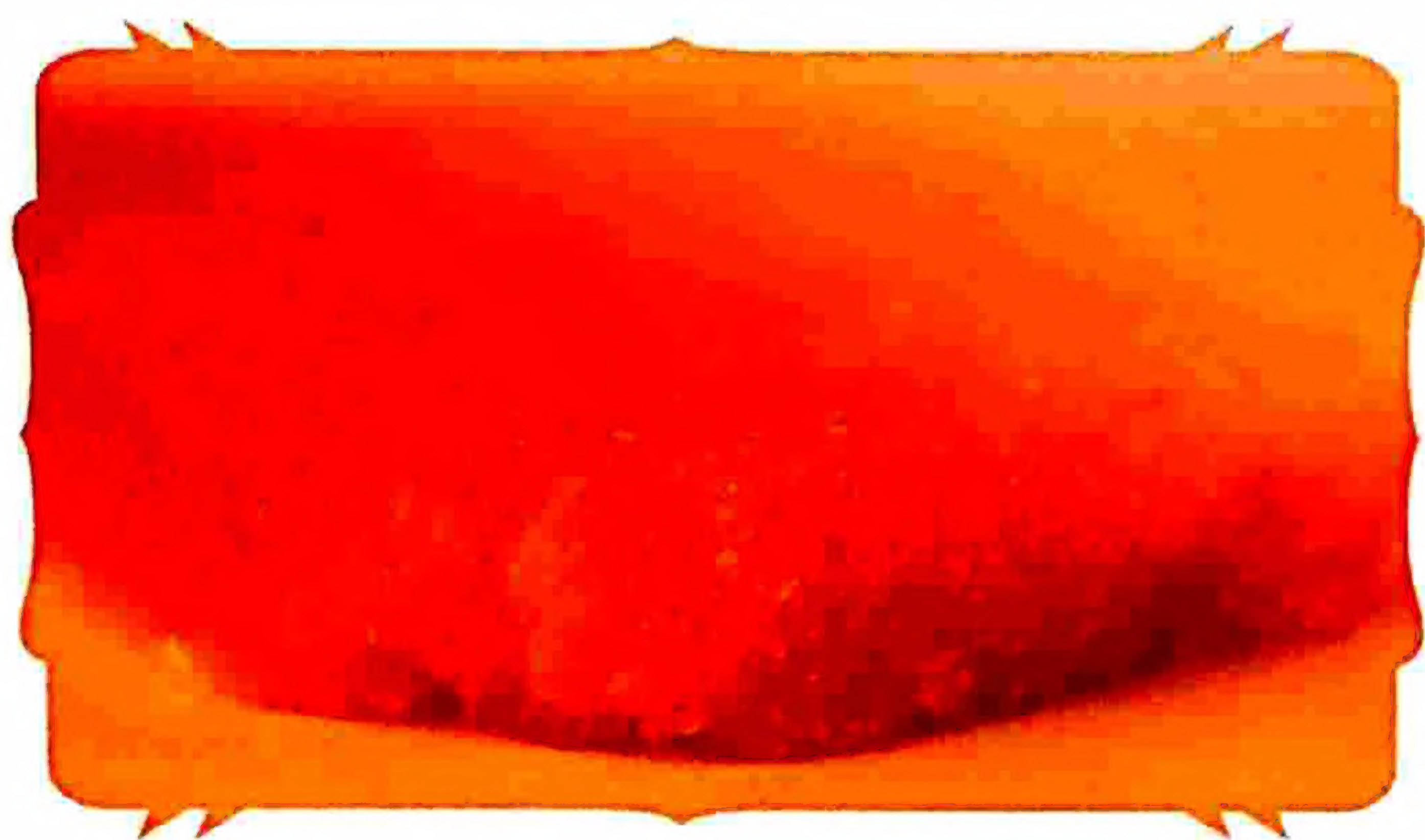


Palak - Spinach has a very high content of Iron and Vitamins.

Paneer - Cottage cheese is a favorite amongst vegetarians in India and can be easily made at home with milk and a souring agent like lime juice. Boil 1 litre of milk, add souring agent till the milk splits, drain and leave to set before using. Reputedly one of Krishna's favorite milky treats.

Parwal - Pointed gourd is a vine growing from the squash family with seeds, native to East India.

Peeli Mishri - Yellow sugar candy widely used in Braj resembles brown sugar but is crunchier and sweeter with a distinct flavour.



Petha - White (ash) gourd is a vine grown large fruit, and is one of the three sacred fruits of the Southern Region of India.

Poni - Perforated ladle indispensable in cooking Indian food. Versatile kitchen tool used for making boondis.

Rai/Sarson - Mustard seeds is a flavoring agent extracted from the beautiful and evergreen Sunflower.

Sabut dhania - Coriander seeds are used as diuretics and for digestive relief.

Sabut Kali Mirch - Whole peppercorns.

Sattu - Roasted gram flour, sometimes mixed with barley (jaun). Its high fiber content makes it healthy for the intestines and has been proven to be preventive for diabetics as well. Sattu has a cooling taseer.

Saunf - Aniseed is a warming, sweet spice native to India, and is one of the most powerful digestive and stomach pain relievers and a popular mouth freshener.

Sendha namak - Rock salt is the solidified and uncrushed form of table salt.

Shahjeera - Black cumin seeds or Caraway seeds is the darker and slightly more warming variation of the normal cumin seeds.

Shakarkandi - Sweet Potato botanically different from a potato being a root, is a fat-free vegetable high in Beta-carotene and Vitamins E & C.

Sooji - Semolina is a staple food in South India and is used to make a variety of sweets and breakfast dishes of India. It is also a known source of high protein.

Tej patta - Bay leaf or bay laurel is a pleasantly aromatic leaf which when eaten whole is pungent and has a very sharp and bitter taste.

Tenti/Dela - Fragrant Manjack is the fruit of a shrub and has many varieties. Used to make pickles and flavor vegetables with its tangy taste, this fruit is Krishna's favorite.

Til - Sesame seeds are touted to be the first known source of seed oil to man and has ancient medicinal properties used to cure heart disease, brittle bones and high cholesterol. Toasted, they could be sprinkled on desserts and bread to give it an extra rich crunch. Hot taseer.

Torai - Ridge gourd is from the cucumber family and hence is a juicy vegetable with zero fat content making it perfect for those watching their weight. It is also very easy to grow in your back garden.

Urad dhuli daal - Black gram washed.



Manmohini Bihariji

Acknowledgements

When we embarked on the journey to temples of India in 2009 it was a leap of faith. With neither contacts nor strategy, it was sheer passion, a belief in the wisdom of our ancestors and the promised excitement of discovery that drove us. This labour of love would have been impossible without fellow travelers, teachers, guides, encouraging spectators and numerous guinea pigs!

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Jai Ho!



Wishing you a joyful and healthy culinary journey.

*We hope you will share your experiences, discoveries and recipes with us to
help us bring out a second edition of Bhog : Temple Food of India.*

Do connect with us on <http://bhogtemplefoodofindia.krishnaprema.in/>



We were exposed to many aspects of temple life on our travels to various temples. One of the most fascinating was the elaborate, almost ritualistic offering of bhog. Each rasoiya took pains to explain to us that bhog preparations are based on five basic pillars:

- • • • • • Local produce
- • • • • • Seasonality
- • • • • • Nutritive requirement of the body according to the ashta prahar (8 divisions of the day)
- • • • • • Presentation
- • • • • • And above all Bhaav

Most pujaris highlighted the underlying 'bhaav' or intention of bhog offering—to pamper, indulge and glorify. We were deeply moved by small gestures that point to a very high level of sensitivity - food must be served at body temperature, the roti must be so soft that no effort is required to break off a morsel and khichdi should have a fluffy consistency so that it doesn't stick in the mouth. Food that is healthy and good for you is rarely as tasty as food that is not! To our surprise the food offered as bhog is not only healthy and tasty but also easy to make and economical as each reader is sure to discover. This book therefore recognizes temple food as the epitome of Indian cuisine and is a small tribute to the unconditional devotion of the custodians of a living culture – the temple cooks. We set up a small

R&D kitchen to try out the recipes given to us by the temple cooks and have retained their measurements. We must acknowledge that every time we made the bhog trying to inculcate the bhaav - lighting incense and deliberately creating an ambience of serenity - the result was truly divine! We also admit that the trials have been highly enjoyable with very satisfying results. No attempt has been made to verify the origin or source of stories or recipes and we make no claim to interpreting religious treatises or scholarship. As homage to the simple rasoiyas of our temple kitchens, we share their narratives in the same spirit in which they shared it with us. The huge variety of offerings that comprises bhog makes it impossible to document every offering from every temple at every prahar.

These are some representative recipes to whet your appetite and inspire you to explore this exciting cuisine.

